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WHAT A MODERN CHURCH BELIEVES

BY

WARREN SEYMOUR ARCHIBALD

Minister of the Second Church of Christ in Hartford

1929

EDWIN VALENTINE MITCHELL

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

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"It is impossible to enclose the spirit of religion which is the spirit of God, in any definition. Religion is the voice of God. Make the church a cage of authority and custom, and the voice will die in synagogue and temple, in chapel and cathedral, and men will hear it in a wild cry from the cross." from p. 16.

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To the Second Church of Christ
in Hartford

Who have given me the glorious privilege of serving them as their minister in Jesus Christ,

I dedicate this book

the word which I have spoken unto them, and which I trust may be a living and life-giving work of Jesus Christ our Lord.

PREFACE

The material in this book represents a ministry of twelve years in the Second Church of Christ in Hartford. That ministry has been singular in love and understanding between the minister and church. So reliable has been this affection, that the minister dares to trust that the message of the book will justify the name.

That message is the word of a preacher who believes that the church of Christ has a gospel for this age and every age. This gospel is the Way of Jesus Christ to God, through all the intricacies and difficulties peculiar to our time. These hindrances are not considered impregnable, but rather as challenges to learning and faith, always to be faced with answerable courage and with new ascents.

The book is published in the hope that as more and more people know what modern ministers and modern churches believe, they will adventure on these new roads to God in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

WARREN SEYMOUR ARCHIBALD

South Church Parsonage
September 27, 1929

INTRODUCTION

The contents of this book represent and express the service of a minister in the Second Church of Christ in Hartford. This is the Second Parish Church, founded in 1670, and known in the city as The South Church. The minister of this historic church believes there is no greater service given to a man than to be a Parish Minister. To bring to men the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; to keep before them continually that most excellent and living way; to maintain amid all the voices of this present world, the place and power of the inner voice; to remind the citizens in a fair and noble city, of that city which hath the foundations whose maker and builder is God; to proclaim the gospel of Christ as light to those in darkness, sight to the blind, life to the broken, freedom to the captive, home to the wanderer, salvation to all men—this is the gospel which this minister has tried to proclaim in this historic Church of Christ.

WARREN SEYMOUR ARCHIBALD.

Hartford, Connecticut.
January 29, 1929.

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WHAT A MODERN CHURCH BELIEVES

"And he said 'Lord I believe.'"
St. John 9 : 38.

THIS verse is taken from the lesson which I read this morning. It is one of the most beautiful, one of the most impressive, and one of the most dramatic stories in the New Testament. Jesus meets this blind man, who was born blind. Jesus gives him sight. The people question him; they cannot bring themselves to like this strange, able man who has given sight to the blind man. At last they expel the man who was born blind from their synagogue. How honest he is in his attitude toward truth! He does not attempt to explain this strange and able personality. One thing he knows: Once he was blind and now he sees. His parents desert him. The man is left all alone with Jesus; and he finds what so many people have found, that "the places of loneliness are the places of illumination." Everyone leaves him, but he refuses to leave the man who gave him sight; and when he

is all alone, expelled from the synagogue, deserted by his father and mother, he meets Jesus, and Jesus says to him: "Do you believe in me? Do you believe in what I have done to you?" And his answer is, "Lord, I believe." The attitude of that man toward Jesus is the true attitude of every one here toward God. Our religion, our Christianity, our attitude toward God, can find expression in those humble words: "Lord, I believe." What does it mean to say "believe"? What does the word "believe" mean in the New Testament? It means in the original word, of which we have here a translation, trust, confidence. It does not mean an opinion; it does not mean that we understand everything about the question. When this man in the story says "Lord, I believe," he means and he says "Lord, I trust you; Lord, I have confidence in you."

We find the same word and the same meaning in that wonderful story where the disciples go down from the Mount of Transfiguration, and meet the man who had a sick son. And Jesus speaking to him, elicits from him the very high and noble answer: "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief. Lord, I trust in you; oh, help me when I fail to trust." And we meet again the same fine and noble answer in the words of

Martha. Lazarus, her brother, is dead. Jesus has come to that weeping family. Turning to Martha he says: "Believest thou?" And she replies: "Lord, Lord, I believe; I trust; I have confidence in You."

The message, therefore, which the minister brings you this morning is this: The fundamental truth of religion can be summed up, so far as it can be summed in one sentence, and as near as possible to a final formula, in this: "I trust myself to God." There is your religion, "I have confidence in God." There is your religion. And when you say you "believe," you say that you trust and have confidence in the Eternal.

There is passing through some parts of our country a movement which calls attention to these so-called fundamentals of religion. It emphasizes as fundamental such opinions concerning God and life as are summed up in these statements: That all men are absolutely bad; that Jesus has given us atonement only for a few; that the great majority of human beings are sinners without hope and heretics without hope; that the Bible is not subject to the criticism of history or science or literature; and that Jesus Christ our Lord will come back probably very soon in a literal Second Advent. These are simply

some of the hopes and opinions of a large number of people. And these opinions, in the judgment of your minister, are not fundamental. They are contrary to the truth. They contradict the facts of universal experience. They commit assault upon the intellect and integrity of man. They are circulated by adherents who exhibit a fatal violence in thought, and an intemperate zeal in words.

Let us recollect this morning some things which we consider fundamental as an outgrowth and development of that fundamental attitude towards God: "Lord, I believe; Lord, I trust myself to Thee."

I emphasize this morning seven aspects of that attitude, not because all fundamentals can be reduced to seven simple sentences, for one minister in one morning's sermon, could not begin to cover the fundamentals of religion. I emphasize seven because that is an easy number to remember, because it is an historical number, because it gathers around itself the essentials of our Christian faith. We speak of the seven cardinal sins; we speak of the seven cardinal virtues; and I venture with all humility this morning to speak of seven cardinal beliefs.

1. First, I believe in God; I trust myself to

God; I have confidence in God; I trust myself to the Eternal, Heavenly Father of this world just as I trust myself to the laws of His universe, even as the farmer trusts to the laws of spring or autumn, seed-time and harvest, even as the high-minded merchant and banker and business man trusts to the noble laws of honor and righteousness and the stern iron laws of economics and thrift. So, when I say I believe in God, I say, like the man in this New Testament story, "Lord, I trust myself to the Eternal." I bury myself in this moral world even as the seed is buried in the ground, knowing, trusting, having confidence that out of such sacrificial life there will bloom and blossom a rich harvest of God's kingdom upon earth. Lord, I believe, I trust myself to the Eternal.

2. Secondly, I believe in Jesus; I have confidence in the teachings of Jesus; I trust myself to the way, the road, the path called Jesus Christ, trusting with all confidence that this way, this road, this path will lead me to the Heavenly Father, to the Eternal God, to the life prepared for us. This does not mean for a moment to assert that there are not other roads. There are other ways to God; there are other roads to the Eternal. Thousands and millions of souls are

walking and have walked those other paths; but we say that the best road, the highest road, the road wherein the valleys are exalted, the mountains and hills are brought low, the crooked is made straight and the rough places plain—this road is the way of Jesus. Jesus is the best interpretation of life, the best interpretation of God, the best interpretation of humanity. He is the house of the interpreter; and those who sojourn in that blessed habitation, those who will make their minds dwell in the mind of Jesus Christ, find that they are entering into the life of the Eternal. This belief, this trust, this confidence in Jesus has now for twenty centuries been tested in the laboratories of history and humanity; and it has worked. Those who take the way called Jesus find that they come to God. Lord, I believe in Jesus. I don't pretend to know all about the Eternal; neither do I pretend to understand all the mystery of human life. One thing I know, when I walk this way called Jesus it leads me into strength, into peace, into light.

3. In the third place, I believe in the Holy Spirit. I believe that in every human being there is a divine, a holy spirit. I believe that in everyone there is a light, even the light which lighteth every man in this world. This light within you

has in different times and in different ages and in different places had different names, but it is one in all climes and dominions; it is the divine spark within you; it is the divine fire within you; it is the divine spirit within you. It is really you; it is really your life; it is what will ultimately survive in you. This body is but the envelope to the real letter. This human body is simply the temporary dwelling place of the divine fire, and when we believe in the light which scattereth the darkness of this world, we believe that it is our responsibility so to shield that flame within us from all the winds of passion, so to feed and strengthen that fire within us that it will never go out; so to strengthen and feed that fire that it will grow with brighter meaning. This is the development of the life within you. This is the guidance of the inner light.

4. I believe in the Church. I trust myself to God, according to the way called Jesus, guided by the inner light, *in company with other people,* in the goodly fellowship of all those who walk that way; for the church is the fellowship and the company of all those who try to walk the way of goodness in the spirit of Jesus, home to God. Therefore, joining the Church does not mean that you are thereby saving yourself any

more than joining the army of the country means that you are saving yourself. You lose yourself when you join the army of your country; you lose yourself in order to save your cause, your ideal; and in so losing yourself and saving your ideal, you win and obtain yourself. And so, a man, in joining the company, even the blessed fellowship called the Church of Christ, does not save himself; but, if with all earnestness and sincerity, with all devotion and fire, he enters into the life of that fellowship, he saves the cause which is the kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth; he saves the Church which is the fellowship of all those who keep that path straight, who keep the roads open, who lift up the valleys and open wide the doors into the knowledge of God. Lord, I believe in the Church; I know the Church has made mistakes; I know there are blots upon her escutcheon; I know there are blood-stained pages in her history; but I judge the Church by the best and not by the worst. This man in the story which I read was expelled by his Church. They put him out. But he judged his Church, not by the worst, who expelled him, but by the best, even Jesus, who received him. Judge the Church of Jesus Christ, judge all the churches which lead

people home to God, not by the worst which is in them, but by the best.

5. I believe in the Bible. I trust in the Bible; I have confidence in the Bible as a guide-book and a text-book for all those who are journeying in this way. We do not look upon the Bible as a text-book in science, in geology. We do not look upon the Bible as a supreme authority in that department of life; but the Bible is the best book, the great book, in the dialogue between man and God. There in all its accents, now in trembling, broken tones, now on the part of man in the words and temper of the rebellious child, now on the part of humanity in the mood and disposition of a savage, now on the part of man in the fine aspiration of great prophetic souls and pure-hearted men and women, there in all its accents, leading up to the perfect voice, the perfect tone, the perfect accent of Jesus Christ, there in all forms and ways you have the dialogue between God and man—man, trusting himself to God, having confidence in the Eternal. Lord, I believe in the Bible; I trust the Book; and I have confidence in the Book.

6. I believe in the forgiveness of sins. We all have sinned. No one here is perfect, but we are

all children of the Heavenly Father, and He forgives, He is willing to forgive, He is glad to forgive all those who have walked the way to Him, even the way home which was walked with all honor and humility by the man who went into a far country and left his father's house. This does not for a minute suggest that you will not be punished for your sins. No man can sin and escape the scar on his soul. No man can sin and erase, as he would rub out the writing on a slate, the burning memory of a black hour, the haunting recollection of a tragic day. We do not preach any boisterous hilarity of a cheap forgiveness of sins, but with solemn solemnity and high seriousness we proclaim, though you are punished and though you will not be able to forget, yet you are children of God and He will lead you even through your punishment, even through your memory, unto a forgiveness which will give you light.

7. I believe in the life everlasting. I believe that death is but the commencement of another life; I believe with all sincerity and simplicity that that life everlasting is characterized above all by the removal of all those limitations which give tragedy, disease, death, to our human life. Even Paradise, life everlasting for the Christian,

is the world where you will have the glory of going on, where you will only ask the wages of going on, where you will be the man you wanted to be on this earth and yet never could altogether be, where you will be the woman which you prayed to be on this earth where your prayers were never altogether obtained; where you will do the work, write the poem, paint the picture, live the life to which you aspired on this earth, but from which you were debarred by the limitations of this mortal life. I believe in the life everlasting as the life abundant, the rich life, the fullness of life which we see in Jesus Christ. Lord, I trust in God; I trust in the way called Jesus; I trust in the Church; I trust in the inner light; I trust in the Bible; I trust in the forgiveness of sins; I trust in the life everlasting. And what is all this but saying, as the soldier said in the time of war: "Religion is betting your life there is a God." What is all this but saying, as a great Scotch preacher said: "Religion is not the assent to a creed, but the consent to a life." What is all this but saying that if you only trust yourself to God, if you only have confidence in Jesus, if you only trust yourself to the inner light within you, if you only have confidence in the fellowship of those who walk

in the way called Jesus, which is the Church—what is all this but saying that you are producing goodness? There is the ultimate aim of all religion. Oh, make it clear, make it clear in your life. You are judged by the amount of goodness you produce; you are judged by God, the Eternal, by the amount of goodness and the quality of the goodness of your life. It is not a question, when it comes to joining the Church, of whether you are good enough to join. Many people, with all earnestness and sincerity, feel that they are not good enough to join the Church. I don't think that is the question. I think the question you ought to ask yourself is this: Do you think God is good enough for you? It is not a question of whether you are good enough or not good enough. It is simply a question of whether you think God, in the way called Jesus, guided by the light within you, in the fellowship of the Church, instructed by this Book, trusting in the forgiveness of sins, having confidence in the way everlasting; it is a question of whether you think God is good enough for you.

Two things should bear upon a man as he considers the solemnity of uniting with the kingdom called the Kingdom of God; and the first thing

is his need. Does he need God? And the second is like unto it: Can God meet that need? Does he feel a great need for walking the way called Jesus? Does he feel a deep and burning need to increase that light within him? Does he feel a need of living a life? Does he feel a need of having his wife, his children, all his dear friends, live beyond the door called Death? If he feels that need, if it presses upon him like a glacier, then it is not a question of whether he is good enough, but whether the Eternal God, oh, made so clear in Jesus, made so personal in the light within you, made so friendly and noble in the fellowship of those who walk that way—it is then a question of whether this is good enough for him.

> "But blest is he who playing deep yet haply asks
> not why,
> Too busied with the crowded hour to fear to
> live or die."

Oh, my friends, your Christianity, your religion, in the sight of the Eternal God, has this for its fundamental character: Are you helping Him with passion, with tears, with all your mind and with all your heart, with all the joy that is in you, with all the life that is in you, are you

helping His Kingdom to make good? Are you helping God, the Eternal, to make goodness on this earth, even the goodness that was in Jesus Christ, our Lord?

Lord, I believe; *Lord, I trust;* oh, help me when I fail to trust. Lord, I trust myself to Thee.

PRAYER

Infinite Father, our Heavenly Father, we put our hand in Thy hand today. We look up into the light of the Eternal. We see the faces of those who trusted in Thee and were not ashamed. We hear this morning the voices of a multitude which no man can number, who were confident that Thou wouldst lead them unto life Eternal. Help us, we pray Thee, to have this noble trust, even the confidence of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

OPEN HEAVENS

"The Heavens were opened and I saw visions of God."—*Ezekiel 1 : 1.*

THIS text in substance is very ancient, and yet in spirit it is amazingly modern. The man who said those words lived centuries ago. He was an exile. He was a captive. He was a man who had known adversities and calamities. But through all disasters he clung tenaciously to his trust in God. And then, suddenly, the wonderful thing happened: the Heavens were opened and he saw visions of God.

Now, there is the stuff out of which pure religion is made: man, the universe, and experience; the open heavens and visions of God.

Religion depends on your idea of God. Who is God? How shall I know God? When shall I appear before God? The chief end of man is the answer to these questions. Religion is a Vision of God. Religion is an experience of advents, epiphanies, and transfigurations. Religion is a vital, personal, adventurous, thrilling experience with the mysteries of life and death, and

the meanings behind them. Religion is concerned with the gleams and glimpses of that meaning. Religion is emphatically and essentially a light, a light that has come to you, a light that you can never forget, a light that never was on sea or land, a vision of God.

Yet we forget this truth. We come to think more of the lamp than we do of the light. And then this terrible tragedy may develop: men possess the lamp, and have no light, and know not that the light has gone out. Religion is not the lamp nor the candlestick. Religion is not the institution, the organization, the system. It is dangerous to confine, restrain, and shut up the spirit of religion, just as it is dangerous to restrain and imprison any great force. It is, in truth, impossible to enclose the spirit of religion, which is the spirit of God, in any definition. Religion is the voice of God. Make the church a cage of authority and custom, and the voice will die in synagogue and temple, in chapel and cathedral, and men will hear it in a wild cry from a cross.

I

All men have had some idea of God. In some degree, to every man, has come this experience:

the Heavens were opened, and he has seen visions of God. There is a strong argument for the existence of God. All men, in all places, in all times, have had some conception of God. That conception may have been very childish, very primitive, very savage. Still it has been an idea of God. Still it has been their vision of God.

To this primitive, savage man, all the world is filled with spirits, devils and gods. It is not the river which drowns his son. It is the god in the river who strangles his child. To these Homeric peoples, the gods are like unto us in passion, but superior in power. To Socrates and Plato, the conception of God rises far above this anthropomorphism to the vision of God as the Eternal Goodness. To Aristotle, the conception of God is exalted to the vision of the Infinite Mind. To the Hebrew psalmists, the Heavens are opened, and these declare the glory of their God. To the Hebrew prophets, the conception of God is lifted far above tribal custom, racial taboos, foolish liturgies, cruel convention, to the lofty realms of righteousness and holiness. To Jesus, above all men, were the heavens of experience opened, and the vision of God received in those words which all men can say in sincerity and in truth: Our Father, which art in Heaven.

II

Some such idea of God has every man in this city: Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Hebrew. You may not say very much about it; you may even avoid it, and deny it; but there, in the background, is your idea of God. And your idea of God pretty largely determines men's idea of you.

Now be frank and honest. This question, like all great questions, demands a "yes," or "no," vote. Is there a God, or, is there no God? Elijah put that question in the idiom of Carmel, when he cried: Whom do you serve, God or Baal? How long will you go limping between two sides? How long will you limp, hesitating, between God and Baal?

We put that same question in the vernacular of our modern scientific world when we too cry: Which is your vision of the Universe, the materialistic, or the spiritual? Whom do you serve and believe: blind matter and material, or the spirit of All Seeing God?

Bertrand Russell at least is frank and honest: "Brief and powerless is man's life: on him and all his race, the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and

dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, Omnipotent Matter rolls on its relentless way; for man, condemned today to lose his dearest, himself tomorrow to pass through the gate of Darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that enoble his little day."

There is the issue. Omnipotent Matter or Omnipotent God?

On that question the Christian, no longer limping between two sides, decides for God. His Heavens are opened and he has visions of God. His sound, sensible, rational reasons for this conviction are as follows:—

1. I believe in God, because without that hypothesis, the universe does not seem credible, or intelligible, or tolerable. God, at the very least, is a necessary hypothesis.

2. I believe in God, because all men, in all times, in all places, have had some idea of God. The shadow in the mind of man implies a reality in the eternal mind of God. The shadow of the tree leads me to believe there is a real tree somewhere.

3. I believe in God, because the greatest men, the seers, the prophets of insight and far sight,

have believed in God. Their experiences in the laboratories of the universe have been recorded and verified.

4. I believe in God, above all and over all, because Jesus, the wisest and best of men, believed absolutely in the Father of all men. Whoever has seen Jesus has seen the Father.

With these sound, sensible reasons the follower of Jesus declares the faith that is in him. He believes in God. He trusts in God. Even when the Heavens fall, new Heavens are opened to his faith, and he has visions of God.

III

Such opening of the Heavens has been the work of science in our day. We are living in one of the great chapters of the modern world. It is an age of the new learning. It compares with the new learning of the Renaissance. Wise men in those days discovered the new and large world of Copernicus and Galileo. Wise Christians in those days enlarged their religion according to the new knowledge. Wise men did exactly the same thing centuries ago when the Hebrew traditions of the Christian communities met the philosophy of Greece; and the prologue to St.

John's gospel is a hymn of praise to the insight of those days.

Now, we today are in precisely the same situation. The science of our day has still further enlarged our universe. It has infinitely enlarged our world. It has magnified our universe. It speaks of processes, evolving, developing in millions and millions of years. It measures space and light and speed and energy and relativity, in terms of billions and billions. It goes down into the depths, it ascends into the heights, and it returns saying: behold, the glory of the great worlds we have found in atom and in star is not worthy even to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed to us in an ever enlarging world.

Science, in a word, has enlarged our conception of God. Science has opened our Heavens. We have been given visions of God. We have discovered that our prophets, who have attained a vision of God, find that vision clarified, magnified, by the discoveries of science.

Religion is like a telescope. Religion is an instrument designed to bring things that are far off near to the vision. And the bigger the world, the bigger your instrument must be. The great world today demands a great vision of God.

Religion is like unto a microscope. Religion is an instrument designed to magnify the least of these, to bring the most obscure, anonymous, and unseen, into the vision of man. And the more intricate and involved your world, the more sensitive and exact your instrument must be. Science has enlarged our conception of God beyond all measure.

IV

This conception of God, which science has magnified and glorified, is essentially the vision of God we see in Jesus. For the God and Father of Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The God who knows the flower in the field and the bird in the nest, is the same God, essentially, who knows the atom and the star. The knowledge is deeper. The wisdom is wider. The learning is richer. But our God, is in spirit, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Again we come to the Christian conclusion: the best idea of God any man can have is the idea of God that was in Jesus.

What was that idea? What was His conception of God? When His Heavens were opened, what were His visions of God?

Well, in the first place, Jesus does not try to prove God. He proclaims God. He assumes God.

Jesus thinks of God in the most human, natural way. There is nothing here of magic, or the trance, or the séance.

Jesus thinks of God as near and accessible. There is nothing here of remoteness, and exclusiveness. His God is not a king who must be approached through courtiers and servitors. He is Our Father to Whom every man may come. Many people today think of God, as far removed from them, and only accessible, through the expert connection of the specialist.

Jesus thought of God as Infinite love. There is nothing here of cruelty and savagery. God cares. God knows. God remembers.

Jesus thought of God as eternal power. There is nothing here of weakness and futility and incompleteness. All things are possible with God.

Jesus thought of God as everlasting patience. There is nothing here of the mortal mood of impatience and surrender. Your Heavenly Father has the patience to wait a million years in order to make this common stone. Will He not much more have patience with you, as He labors to transform the shifting sands of your life, into the living rock of which He will build His

church? In Jesus Christ, the Heavens were opened, and we beheld the best vision of God.

V

Without this Vision of God the people will perish! Blind to the Vision, our blindness will increase. Deaf to the Voices, our deafness will increase.

How, then, shall we escape so great a peril? How shall we attain this conception of God? Our way to possess the knowledge is the way of Jesus. "Quiet familiarity with the deep things of life brings at last the great truths of life." Put yourself in the way of the world of God, and suddenly you will possess the knowledge of God. Bury yourself in the day's work as the seed is buried, as the leaven is hidden. Dig yourself in. Harrow and plow yourself under. Do the plain day's work as in obedience to duty, as one not disobedient to a Heavenly Vision, and then suddenly, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the Heavens are opened. Your Light has come. Your dayspring from on high has dawned. Your advent, your epiphany, your apocalypse, is here and before you. You have had your vision of God.

Was I in captivity like the prophet? Even there I waited for the Lord; I waited patiently for Him, and at last the Heavens were opened and in my disasters I saw Visions of God.

Was I in Nazareth like the Lord? Even there I waited for the Lord; I waited patiently for Him, and at last the Heavens were opened, and in restraints and restrictions and obscurities, I saw Visions of God.

Was I a rebel, on my road to Damascus? Even there, God waited for me; He waited patiently for me, and suddenly my Heavens were opened, and I saw the Light.

Was I a spendthrift of the treasure of life? Even there, God waited for me; He waited patiently for me; and I who had sought Him diligently, who had fled from Him wilfully, was at last found by Him.

PRAYER

Almighty and all merciful God, who hast given unto all Thy children upon earth, the glory of the open heavens, grant unto all seeking hearts likewise the glory of the open vision, so that seeing we may know, and knowing we may love. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

RELIGION AND EVOLUTION

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."
—*I Thess.* 5 : 21.

I

LAST Sunday I was speaking to you of Science and Religion. This morning may I bring before you that aspect of Science, called Evolution, and its relation to religion. I do this because so many people are interested in this vital question, because the Dayton trial gave an unfortunate notoriety and a false impression, and because the minds of so many are confused. Let me try to give you a clear idea.

And if I can give you a clear idea, I shall be giving you, then, the best possible gift for Advent Sunday and the Christmas season. For as it has been well said by Arthur Thomson: "The most powerful factors in the world are clear ideas in the minds of energetic men of good will."

To get a clear idea of religion and evolution let us start with these words of Paul: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." That

is a good text for the man of religion who believes in evolution; and for the man of science who believes in religion.

What, then, is evolution? Evolution is the theory, accepted by men of repute both in religion and in science to describe the procession of life. Evolution does not attempt to explain the beginning and the end. It describes only the process. Evolution does not attempt to explain the origins or the finalities of being. It describes only the process of becoming. Religion, on the contrary, surveys the Beginning, the Process, and the End. Religion sees the Beginning and the End with the eyes of Faith, and it beholds the process with the eyes of science. Evolution, then, is the theory which describes the process of life.

This theory of evolution is not new. The Greeks were familiar with the great idea. St. Loe Strachey in his book—"The River of Life" —says the modern scientist is the mountain climber, toiling slowly, carefully, bravely up the mountain range of truth, reaching at last after heroic effort the lofty summit only to find there the guess, the speculation, the arrow, which some Greek had shot to the summit two thousand years ago. The theory of evolution: that life is and has been a process of becoming, that

"the present is the child of the past and the parent of the future," the theory of evolution is not new. This ancient theory received the impetus which makes it acceptable now as a working theory for men of religion and science, from the great intellectual revival in the nineteenth century. Darwin prepared the way with "The Origin of Species" in 1859. Huxley and Spencer were leaders. Tennyson and Browning were heralds of the new learning. Henry Drummond was a preacher of the new light. John Fiske was a philosopher of the new knowledge. Vast harvests of evidence were brought in from fields white unto harvest. Lift up your eyes and behold the fields in which the mind of man has labored. Here are the abstract sciences: Logic, Metaphysics, and Mathematics. Here are the general sciences: Sociology, Psychology, Biology, Physics, and Chemistry. Here are the special sciences: Ethnology, Æsthetics, Zoölogy, Botany, Astronomy, Meteorology, Mineralogy, History, Anthropology, Geology, and Geography. Here are the applied sciences: Economics, Medicine, Engineering, Metallurgy, and Agriculture. From all fields came the evidence which supports the theory; not enough to prove it absolutely, but enough to make it a satisfactory theory to de-

scribe the process; the most satisfactory theory we possess; and the man of religion says: "Well done, good and faithful servants of the mind; we will hold fast this which is good, until you find a better theory."

Evolution, therefore, is simply the clearest, bravest, best idea we have to describe the process of life. Evolution, therefore, says that the Process is "the gradual emergence of higher and higher forms of life." Evolution, therefore, says that the Process is "the gradual development of higher and more complex organisms from lower or simpler sorts of living things." "It is a luminous interpretation of the world through the light of the Past on the Present." Evolution describes that Process as a struggle for existence; as a survival of the fit; as a mastery of nature; as the emergence of mind; as the ascent of man. In that immeasurable process there have been innumerable agencies, such as the working out of a spoken language; the invention of tools; the discovery of fire; the utilization of iron; the taming of the dog, horse, sheep and cattle; the cultivation of wild plants like wheat; the irrigation of fields. In that interminable process "Necessity has been the Mother of invention, and Curiosity has been the Father of invention."

Such is the theory which has been accepted by serious and sincere students, in religion and in science, as the most satisfactory description of the solar system; the making of the earth; the emergence of plants, animals, and man; the growth of language, folkways, and institutions; and the development of feelings, emotions, ideas, and imaginations.

II

Now, between religion and evolution, there is no conflict. Let that be your clear idea. There is not the slightest reason for any Christian to be afraid of evolution. Never be afraid of the New Learning. But be fearful of Old Ignorance, yea I say unto you, be ye afraid of Ignorance which is the Father of Superstition, and Bigotry. You will find a good illustration of what will happen if you prefer Ignorance to Learning, if you just turn back the pages of History. Turn back to the year 1517 in England. There was in that century a New Learning. More, Colet, and Erasmus were the leaders of the New Learning. Many were afraid of the New Learning, and clung to the Old Ignorance. For example, "it

chanced that in Coventry a Franciscan monk made bold to preach publicly to the people, that whoever should daily pray through the Psalter of the Blessed Virgin could never be damned. The regular pastor of the place, thinking it would soon blow over, and that a little more devotion to the Virgin could do no harm, took little notice of it at first. But when he saw the worst men were the most religious in their devotion to the Virgin's Psalter, and that, relying on the friar's doctrine, they were getting more and more bold in crime, he mildly admonished the people from his pulpit not to be led astray by this new doctrine." More says in his own words "while this frenzy was at its height, it so happened that I had to go to Coventry to visit a sister of mine there. I had scarcely alighted from my horse when I was asked the question, 'Whether a person who daily prayed through the Psalter of the Blessed Virgin could be damned.' I laughed at the question as absurd. I was told forthwith that my answer was a dangerous one."

Now there was the New Learning of the sixteenth century meeting the Ignorance of that day. And it is easy for us to see in the perspective

of four centuries that the learning of Sir Thomas More was Light, and the ignorance in Coventry was Darkness.

You can very easily be a Christian who is ignorant of all learning. You can be a devout, sincere, and holy Christian, and still be ignorant of old learning and new learning. You can be ignorant of the fact that the earth is round and not flat, and you may wilfully believe that "the sun do move." And yet this is the point: it is not safe, it is not right, for people to be ignorant. It is not safe, it is not right for either the ignorant or the learned, to be intolerant. If this thing be in the nature of falsehood, it will come to naught. If it be of the nature of God, it will come to something divine. It is not safe, it is not right, to vote evolutionists out of a church, dismiss them from mission boards, expel them from colleges, and legislate against the teachings of evolution in the schools. This is the way of Ignorance, and Ignorance breeds degeneration.

Muzzle the mind of man and you drive him back through ignorance to the life of the savage and the brute from which he has ascended. That ascent has always been determined by the fearless, heroic thinking of men. The thinkers, being lifted up from above the herd instinct, the mob

ignorance, have drawn all men unto them. Civilized man has risen from the jungle of uncivilized man because he has dared to think like a man and not like an animal. Christian man rose a victor over the old Pagan Religions because he was able to out-think them. Jesus Christ our Lord rises above all men because He thinks like a God. Peter is the rock material with which Christ builds His church. Peter is the man quarried from the rock, dug from the pit, lifted from that which is natural to that which is spiritual. But woe be to Peter if he continues to think like a rock, to think like an animal, or to rest content with the thinking of dead men. Christ his Lord will turn to him, and rebuke him saying: "Peter, you do not think like a God." "Think with the mind of Jesus Christ," is the command of the Church of Christ to Peter. Think without fear and without favor.

Remember the long, long struggle in which the mind of man has risen from the depths. Remember the men of olden time. Says Æschylus: "First, beholding, they beheld in vain, and hearing, heard not, but like shapes in dreams, mixed all things wildly down the tedious time, nor knew to build a house against the sun with sides of wicker work, nor any wood work knew, but

lived like silly ants beneath the ground, in hollow caves unsunned. There came to them no steadfast sign of winter, nor of spring flower-perfumed, nor of summer full of fruit, but blindly and lawlessly they did all things."

Remember man's struggle to lift his mind to God. Says William James: "Bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh are these half-brutish prehistoric brothers. Girdled about with the immense darkness of this mysterious universe even as we are, they were born and died, suffered and struggled. Given over to fearful crime and passion, plunged in the blackest ignorance, preyed upon by hideous and grotesque delusions, yet steadfastly serving the profoundest of ideals in their fixed faith, that existence in any form is better than non-existence, they ever rescued triumphantly from the jaws of ever imminent destruction, the torch of life which thanks to them now lights the world for us."

Revere the men who kept the torch of life burning. Remember the long process in which the Light of Learning has gradually overcome the Darkness of Ignorance. Remember that the Darkness which comprehends not the Light, is Danger and Death. Remember that Evolution is the modern name for the ancient idea that in

the procession of life "the present is the Child of the Past and the Parent of the Future." Remember the clear idea that there is no Conflict between Religion and Evolution.

III

Not only is there no conflict, but there is real coöperation. Religion and Evolution are both scholars in the school of God; and Religion has learned great lessons from the clear ideas of Evolution. Religion has received a larger conception of God; a larger conception of God's world; a larger conception of the moral struggle. In the moral world, in the life of the Spirit, in the mind and the soul of man, there must be a constant struggle, a survival of the fit, the emergence of the mind, the growth of the soul.

Just as the world which Evolution describes is a world in which "the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin" mean disaster and death, just so in the spiritual world the lamps that are not shining and bright mean darkness, and the ungirt loins mean death. "Gird up the loins of your mind" says Evolution to Religion. "Let your light shine" says the Master Mind of man. Climb; struggle; up, from rock to rock; on, from height

to height. And those who have been the Lights of God in their several generations will light you on this steep ascent to Heaven.

In this creative process of life, the greatest opportunity of a Christian is to let God in; the greatest sin of a Christian is to shut God out. God enters the creative process of life most actively in man. The proof of that statement is the life of Jesus Christ. When men see Jesus, they see the Father. The Spirit of God, we do believe, has entered this creative process in all times, in all places. As the ancient mystic said: there is the spirit that sleeps in the rock, lives in the animal, and thinks in man. In that spirit we live, and move, and have our being. Through all the creative and evolving process is God. In the beginning—God. In the process—God. In the end of all things—God. Through all the evolving, developing mystery of life, God enters, as the source of life, as the governor of life. His Advents are not occasional, sporadic breaks and entrances. His Advents are to be found in the mornings—that never fail to come, in the light—that never fails to dawn, in the universal order of His laws, in the sure and certain presence of those ultimates in value: goodness, truth, and beauty. Through all the Process

of life, His Advents are to be found. But most of all, those advents and those incarnations, are to be found in our humanity. Most visibly will we see Him, in the minds and souls of men. To you is given above all created beings the glory of letting God in. You are the doorkeepers in the House of the Lord. You keep the door. Even God does not force or break His way through the door of man's mind. He stands at the door and knocks. He stands at the door and says: "I, if you let me enter, will sit down and sup with you and break with you the Bread of Life." You can let God in. You can shut God out. You can let Him in if you receive the New Learning. You will shut Him out if you cling to Old Ignorance. Prove all things; hold fast that which is Good.

With the eyes of Science, behold the process, survey the steep ascent, consider the theory of evolution and call it good. With the eyes of Faith, beholding, we shall not behold in vain, that within the process is "one increasing purpose," that before and beyond the process is the power of the Eternal, Infinite, and Unchangeable God; that without this vision of God the people perish in a meaningless, mechanical process; that with this Vision of God, the process

becomes a progress, the progress of the pilgrim mind of man seeking and finding the mind of God, the soul of man seeking and finding the City which has the foundations whose builder and maker is God.

PRAYER

Infinite Father, Father of all men and of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hast given unto us for our salvation both the steep ascent to Heaven, and the Heavenly City won at last, grant that, receiving Thee and Him whom Thou hast sent, we may have power to become Thy sons; so that having climbed the long and steep ascent, we may at last win the Holy City. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE

"When Jesus ended these words, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching; for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes."—*Mark 1 : 22.*

THIS morning I propose to bring before you the subject: "Science and the Bible."

Our age is not unlike that of William Tyndale's, and our work is not dissimilar to his heroic labor. William Tyndale lived in an age of New Learning, and in the light of that new learning he translated the New Testament into the glorious English of our Bible. We, too, are living in another era of new learning, and it is our bounden duty to translate the spirit of the Bible, out of the letter of the Bible, into the free life of man. For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

To find that key to the Bible we turn to these words about Jesus: "When Jesus ended these words, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes." There in those

plain words which everyone can understand is the key which unlocks the message of the Bible, and opens the value of the Scriptures. Jesus impressed the multitude as one having authority. Jesus has always, in all places, among all peoples, given this profound impression of authority.

1. The authority of Jesus stood before the multitude as a very different kind of authority from that of the scribes. Their authority was in documents, parchments, and institutions. The authority of Jesus was in life, in truth, in goodness. Their authority was outward. His was inward. He referred his authority to God. The one infallible authority is God. Nothing human is infallible. No church is infallible. No book is infallible. No human beings are infallible. Only God is infallible. Jesus makes that plain as light.

2. Remembering that the authority of Jesus is the inward, divine spirit, the spirit of God in man, let us turn to the Bible. What is the Bible?

The Bible is a Book, a masterpiece in our English literature. The Bible is a Library of Books, on two shelves: the Old Testament, and the New Testament. The Old Testament is a shelf of thirty-nine books, written in Hebrew, with the exception of a few chapters in Ezra and Daniel in Aramaic. These books record the ex-

perience of the Hebrew genius in their Vision of God. The New Testament is a shelf of twenty-seven books written originally in Greek, and perhaps completed between 150 A. D. and 180 A. D. These books record the experience of the early Christian communities in their Vision of God through Christ Jesus their Lord.

Beside these two main shelves of books, there is a third shelf: the Apocrypha. This consists of fourteen books which do not appear in the Hebrew Bible, but which do appear in the Septuagint and Vulgate. On these three shelves are the books of which the Bible is composed. But when we press that question: What is the Bible? *What is the Bible essentially?* the answer is this: *The Bible is the best record we have of the Vision of God.* The Bible is the noblest testimony to the spirit of God, in converse with the spirit of man, and above all in dialogue with the spirit of Jesus. The authority of the Book is the authority of Jesus, and not the authority of scribes. Follow the letter, like a scribe, and you are in a process that kills life. Follow the spirit, like Jesus, and you are in a progress that gives life.

3. Having, then, received this description of the Bible, let us recall our definition of Science. "Science is the kind of knowledge reached by

recognized methods of observation, experiment, registration, and measurement." Now our Bible, like all our world, has been subjected to the scientific method. That method is, essentially, accurate, truthful observation. Even a plain man, who does not know Hebrew or Greek, can apply to the Bible the scientific method of exact study. For example: Colenso, missionary, Bishop of Natal, was a scholar trained in the scientific method. One of the Zulu chiefs asked this question,—and when he asked it, he, an African native, was using the scientific method:—"whether he could really believe that all the beasts and birds and creeping things upon the earth, large and small, from hot countries and cold, came thus by pairs and entered into the ark with Noah? And did Noah gather food for them all, the beasts and birds of prey, as well as the rest?" Intelligent observation, diligent examination, honest registration—all the light of our new learning, all the fire of our new knowledge, has been brought to bear upon the Bible. And the result is this: the Bible is translated into life, into spirit which lives, out of the letter that kills, into the final authority of Jesus, and not the authority of the scribes. The Book appears as the Record of the experience of the Hebrew

people with God, as the record of the experience of the Christian community with Christ. The Book appears as a vast collection containing myths, legends, and folk tales; histories, chronicles, biographies; pastorals, lyrics, and temple hymns; poetry, prose, and the prophetic interpretation of life.

In the Old Testament this material is the growth of uncounted years. Scientific study of the Bible has revealed the fact that it has been in a process of evolution. The Bible is an historical growth and development. It was not dictated by God, to humanity, as a man dictates a letter to his secretary. It came into existence and expression as all literature, racial and individual, has come into being. The Bible evolved and developed exactly as the race it represented evolved and developed. It owes its power and glory to no magical qualities, but simply and only to the inherent goodness and imperative truth which it presents to man. And just because the Bible has grown and developed into its present form, there is much in the book which belong to the low levels and there is much in the book which belongs to the highest levels of life.

There is much here, then, of supreme value.

There is something here of little value and no value. How can you tell which is of supreme worth, and which is of little value? Use the scientific method yourself. Observe with your own eyes. Think with your own mind. Use your common sense. Read with intelligence. Use the experience of other readers and other interpreters. Use above all the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which is in others, which is above all in Jesus.

4. Out of such accurate observation, and such diligent and fervent reading, there emerges a Greater Bible. Never was the Bible so great, never was the Bible so commanding, never was the Bible so bright with the Truth, Goodness, and Beauty of God, as it is today. Scientific study has given us a larger conception of God; a larger conception of God's world; a larger conception of moral effort. Scientific studies have also given us a larger Bible. It is now the "monumental symbol" of the "spiritual experience" of mankind. It is a greater Book, because it is free. It is set free from ignorance, and prejudice. It stands before us as the supreme word on religion. It is free from the misunderstanding which thinks of it as a textbook in geology or astronomy. *It is distinctly the word on Religion,*

the Word of God, the Word made visible in the life of Jesus Christ. It is now a greater book because the Word is clear that God who was in the beginning, who was in the genius of one people, was also in all races, in all places, in all times, is now working in you, through you, just as surely as ever He worked through Hebrew prophet, and Christian disciple. The Book is greater because it is set free from the scribes and the letter. It is seen to possess the authority of Jesus, which is the power of the Spirit of God in Him. And that spirit that was in Jesus, that is in this Word, is in you also, enabling you to know the Truth of God, to live the life of His Goodness, and to see the King in His Beauty. By that Holy Spirit in you also, you are the pages of that Bible which God is always making, which God has never finished.

5. This new and greater Bible, given us by the new and greater learning of the nineteenth century, declares that the Authority of the Book is not in the words and letters, but in the Holy Spirit, within the Book, within the man, within the Lord of man. And it is true that when we come to an end in the study of the words, we are astonished to find the spirit speaking with authority and not as the scribes. The new and

greater Bible is a "monumental witness to the presence in man of the Holy Ghost." The Divine Spirit in you will discover the Divine Spirit in the Bible. The Divine Spirit in the Bible will find the Divine Spirit in you. The Book will *find you.* Deep will be calling unto Deep; Truth will be crying unto Truth; Goodness will answer to you, as you search with a humble and contrite heart for the Goodness of God in His Word; ever and ever the face of Christ will look at you from the pages of the Book, and the Spirit in you will bear testimony to the Spirit in Jesus Christ your Lord.

6. And the conclusion of the whole matter is in that one word: Christ. What is the Bible? The Bible is Christ for us. The Value of the Bible is Christ. The Power of the Bible is the Power of Christ. The message of the Bible is the Gospel of Christ. Whatever in that Book leads us to Christ is worth while. Whatever in that Book does not lead us to Christ is not worth while. Wherever the fire burns in that Book there is the presence and power of God. This Book is supreme because it has the capacity to set men on fire. Man is divine because he is of the quality and material which can be set on fire. Bring the divine fire in that Book nigh unto

the slumbering flame in you, and there will burst forth a light which will scatter the darkness, and lighten the whole world.

On fire for God! There is the power of the Book, there is the power of Christ, and there is the power that ought to be in you. The Burning Bush is the glorious symbol for the Church of Christ, the Disciple of Christ, and for the Lord Christ Jesus. Burning but never consumed, possessed with passionate enthusiasms, and more than conquerors through a glowing faith, the men who are on fire for God are the men who have the only authority. Jesus had that Divine Fire. The multitudes saw that Fire. Here was one who spoke with authority and not as the scribes. Jesus translated the Fire of God into the life of man. Tyndale translated the Fire of God's word into the life of man. Your duty, your glory, is like unto theirs; translate the Fire of God's Word into your own life. Translate the Book into life. Trust the Book. Love the Book. Study the Book. Use your common sense in avoiding the trivial and the transient. Use your common sense in finding the great and permanent realities. Find these, and the Book will guide you to God, the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

O read and love this Book, and you will find yourself, in company with prophets, apostles, and the Lord Jesus, brought into the Presence of God.

PRAYER

Infinite Father, we give Thee thanks for the blessed and holy scriptures, evermore praising Thee in company with all those who live within the living word; and humbly beseeching Thee that we receiving their abundant life may also in our time make Thy laws and Thy statutes to be the songs of our pilgrimage. *Amen.*

THE VOICE OF GOD

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

"For the earnest expectations of [the creature] waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God."—*Romans 8 : 18, 19.*

THIS text is one of the ringing texts in the words of St. Paul. He begins with a favorite phrase, a favorite word, found twenty-seven times in his writings. "I reckon." It has the deeper meaning of reasoning, and, through the depth of reasoning, of coming to the high place of a clear conclusion. "I reckon," says St. Paul. "I gather together all the evidence, and I give my judgment." "I collect together all the reasons I can find, and I come to this conclusion." The man who uses this word, "I reckon," is not a child of impulse, a man who followed a will-o'-the-wisp. This was the man who, after that great experience on the road to Damascus, when the light of God flashed around him, turned from that burning light to spend three years in

Arabia, reckoning, reasoning, concluding, regarding the mystery of that light and of that message. No child of impulse here! And if it is written that there is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, there must have been great joy in Heaven over this chief of sinners, who turned to the voice of God on that road to Damascus.

Here was a man who deliberately, in exile, in the great silence of his conscience and of Arabia, pondered on the voice of God and came to this conclusion: "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed to us through the power of God."

Here was a man who had heard two voices, the voice of man and the voice of God; the voice of man crying, "Oh, that I might find Him"; the voice of man crying, after the reckoning in Arabia, "I go to Him"; and the voice of God saying, "I come to meet my child; I come to find my son."

Here was a man whose reckoning led him through the myriad voices of the world, and all the thundering voices of the mind and flesh, into the clear knowledge of the voice of God.

This, then, is my word, this morning: Moral

greatness in a nation is founded on fellowship between the earnest expectation of the creature and the irresistible revealing of the Creator. Moral greatness in the Church and State is founded on the voice of man in holy communion with, and high dialogue, with the voice of God.

The spiritual ancestor of St. Paul was Elijah. Standing at the entrance of the cave, he heard the wind, the earthquake and the fire, and at last he heard the still small voice of God. Paul, the prophet of God, standing at the entrance of his cave, heard also the wind, the earthquake and the fire, and at last the voice of God. And the prophetic Church of Christ of which you are members—for you are the prophets and sons of the prophets, standing in this year of the Lord before the cavern of the years—must also hear, louder than the voice of the wind, louder than the deep voice of the earthquake, louder than the piercing voice of fire, "the still small voice of God."

Moral greatness in a nation and in a church is established when the men and women, members of that church, obedient to their prophetic inheritance, hear the voice of God.

1. Will you note, then, the message of the voice of God today? In the first place, the voice

of God gave Paul the great assurance *that in this world there is a plan.* The reckoning to which Paul came, the reckoning to which you, the sons and daughters of the prophets, must come, is the great assurance that God has a plan for this world.

This is the thought of Horace Bushnell in his great word: "Every man's life a plan of God." This is the thought of Paul in this great chapter of his reckoning: Every man's world is a plan of God. This world is not of chaos, and divinity is not a mob. The world has a plan. And the cosmic process reveals man, in earnest expectation of that plan; and God, striving to reveal the glory of that plan. The earnest expectation of creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God.

This is the plan of God: That His voice shall be heard above the tumult of Jerusalem, or below the deep silence of Arabia; that the voice of the glory to be revealed to us, shall be heard in and above all the sufferings of this present time; that the voice of God shall be heard in your conscience and in your deeds, in your family and in your city; that His voice shall be heard above all the voices of this present world, with such inescapable power, with such unfor-

gettable accent, that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor power, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the voice of the love of God."

2. In the second place, the voice of God gave Paul the great assurance that God had a purpose in the world. Not only a plan, but infinite love behind the plan! Not only a plan, but a purpose. The very soul in the body!

This world is not a machine, driven without a heart or conscience. The reckoning of twenty Christian centuries does not accept the conclusion of Bertrand Russell: "Brief and powerless is man's life. On him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way." That is not the reckoning of Paul. His reasoning led him to the high conclusion, that within the body of the plan, like a soul, was the purpose of God's love.

This is the purpose of God in this world: Jesus Christ. This is the purpose of God: That you shall be like Jesus Christ, your Lord. This is the purpose of God: That the kingdoms of this world shall be the kingdoms of our Lord. God's purpose is revealed not simply in docu-

ments and laws, but in the life, the glorious and loving life of Jesus Christ, the Lord of men, the Shepherd of souls, the son of God.

Many people who find it possible to believe that God has a plan, find it difficult to believe that this plan has for its soul an infinitely kind purpose. Burdened with sickness, cast down by great troubles, surrounded with many sorrows, they find it very hard to see any purpose in God's plan for their life. Nevertheless such a Christian follows the light that once was given him, even though his way is now in darkness. He cries out with Stevenson:

> "To go on forever and fail and go on again,
> And be mauled to the earth and arise,
> And contend for the shade of a word
> And a thing not seen with the eyes."

There speaks the Christian, who if he cannot see in fullness the purpose of God, nevertheless "contends" for "the thing not seen with the eyes";—and when the road is darkness, makes "the half of a broken hope for a pillow at night."

3. In the third place, the voice of God gave Paul the great assurance that *there was progress in the world.*

Here is the stumbling-block for many Christians; here is the Slough of Despond through which many pass; for, as they read history and as they pass through the experience of their life, they ask themselves: "Is there really any progress? Is there really any progress in these twenty centuries since the days of Jesus?" And the reckoning of Paul, the reckoning of the Christian today, is this: the pilgrim's journey is a pilgrim's progress.

Phillips Brooks once said: "Humanity advances and progresses as a man walks, by losing his balance and by regaining it."

The progress of the Christian is just the same. The plan of God, the purpose of the love of God, is now hurled back and stumbles; is now advanced and triumphs. The man of God advances as a man walks, by losing balance now, by regaining it in this experience.

Horace Bushnell once said, in this very church, that the progress of the Kingdom of God was something like the experience of Israel, described in the book of Judges. The book of Judges describes the advance of the experience of God in Israel as a checkered experience. Now the people are hurled back; now they are driven forward.

And so it is with the Kingdom of God on earth. Now it is hurled back; now it is driven forward. But always the life of the pilgrim and the pilgrim church is that of a progress. "Nearer the Cross today than ever we have been before." Nearer the home of God than ever we have been before. Nearer the vision of manhood and of womanhood, nearer the glory of the home and the beauty of holiness, nearer the Kingdom of God on earth, than ever we have been before.

This is the spirit of the Church of Christ today; this should be the spirit of every man and woman as they leave this House of God: You have heard the voice of God, and it bids you to be of good courage. "Be of good cheer," says the voice of Jesus, "for I have overcome the world." "Be of good courage," says the voice of Christ, "for above the tumult and the thundering voices of the world you will hear the voice of God."

Moral greatness in a nation is found in people when they obey that voice—so obedient to the plan, so in fellowship with the purpose, so trusting to the progress, that nothing can separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor power, nor height, nor depth, nor any other

creature shall be able to separate you from the plan and purpose and progress of God in your world.

The voice of God is the voice of the Cross; and the voice of the Cross speaks louder today than the voice of Pilate; and the very silence of the Cross is louder than the shouting of the mob. The voice of Jesus, which was the voice of the Cross, has not fled on the fugitive years, but is speaking in this year of the Lord to you. And this is the earnest expectation of God, that He may not only speak to you, but *through* you to your world and to your time. Go forth as more than conquerors, for you have heard the voice of God speaking to you through the spirit of Jesus Christ, your conqueror. Yes, in this world you will hear the voices of the wind, and of the earthquake, and the fire; but you will also hear, louder than these, through your earnest expectation—so sensitive will you be to the divine aggression of your soul, so responsive will you be to the divine invasion of your conscience, so quick in reply will you be to God's coming in your world—you will hear His voice above all the voices of the world. For the very whisper of the voice of God can penetrate any tumult to the listening soul of man.

PRAYER

Infinite Father, Father of all men and of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose voice is heard in the awakening spring, remembering winter, life giving summer, and the harvest days, grant that we may always hear Thy voice; and hearing, may obey; and through obedience, enter into Thy presence and Thy approval. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE INN AND THE MANGER

"And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."—*Luke 2 : 7.*

THERE are two contrasts here. One is suggested by the scene in the inn; the other is suggested by the scene in the stable. One brings before us the spirit of rejection and misunderstanding; one summons before us the spirit of faith and love.

In what spirit do we come to this Christmas Day? for once more we are approaching the blessed festival of Christmas; once more we read the story of the wise men in St. Matthew; once more we read the story of the shepherds in St. Luke; again we are singing carols; and again we are united in our families. The boys and girls come home from schools and colleges and the Christmas spirit is here.

Where is the spirit of Christ to be found and where is He born? In understanding hearts and in those who love the Lord.

The spirit of the inn was the spirit of those

who did not understand; the spirit before the manger was the spirit of those who had understanding hearts. He was rejected by the inn; there was no room for Him in the inn. Why was there no room? They were not persecuted; they were simply crowded out. They were not treated with scorn; they were not driven away with hard words; they were not persecuted in any sense. They were simply crowded out. They were crowded out by facts and things which in themselves are legitimate if they do not take all the room. There in the inn was commerce, pleasure, travel, all legitimate interests of humanity. But they took all the room. Mary and Joseph and the child were crowded out.

Now, that is a living and everlasting parable of what has happened to men and women from that day to this. Here in this city, in many families, in many cities, and in countless households Christianity is not treated with scorn, religion is not considered with contempt. Christian people are not persecuted. You are not sent to dungeons and to tortures.

Yet what is the attitude of many households, and many individuals toward Christianity and

the Christ Child today? Simply that of the inn:—crowded out! No room for Him in their lives, no room for Him in their interests; crowded out by many human values which, in themselves, are legitimate and reasonable and just, but which have no right to take all the room. Jesus, when He came to minister God's word, made that so clear in His parable. The seed is scattered. And the hard path rejects the seed; the soil, where there are thorns, refuses to keep the seed; the land which is stony rejects the good seed; the pleasures and the cares of this world crowd out the Holy Word. There was no room for them in the inn. Why? They were crowded out.

But there was room for them in the stable; there was room for them in the manger.

What then is the spirit of these who make room for Jesus? There are three groups before the manger and they symbolize for us in a parable the attitudes and moods of those who receive Jesus, as the Spirit of God. Prof. Hocking says that God as a beneficent and good Being cannot live in this world except in the opportunity created by our good-will; He cannot be born except in the opportunity created by your good-will. Now, then, there are three groups of good-will before the manger on Christmas Day. They

created an opportunity through their good-will; they made possible the presence of God as an active, beneficent spirit of goodness.

1. First of all there is Mary and Joseph. What do they symbolize? What is the opportunity of good-will which they created? Mary and Joseph received the Spirit of Jesus because they loved Him. They were nearest to Him. He was their child. Of course they could not crowd Him out. Could you crowd out of your family your dear child? could you crowd out of your household your son and daughter? You have many other interests:—business, and cares, and pleasures. You give them all room, but you *do not* crowd out this darling child; and why? Because you love him and because you are nearest to him. Mary and Joseph received the child because they were His parents; they were nearest to Him; and they loved Him. God comes to you in the same way. My friends, there is no magic about Christmas; there is no necromancy of the skies; there is no strange and wild miracle. It is as simple and noble and unfathomable as humanity. God comes to you through humanity; God comes to you as He came to that first Bethlehem, first of all through your family, first of all through the humanity nearest and dearest to you. When hus-

bands and wives are noble lovers; when sons and daughters are devoted and loyal; when the hearts which they lift up to their parents are understanding hearts, and through the deepening sympathy of life the daughter sees her mother and through the heavy burdens of life the son appreciates his father—when these human experiences of the household and the family, exalted in love, lead you to a nearer and a deeper appreciation of that family, then you are coming nearer to your God; then you are receiving the spirit of Christ. The Christ Child is born in your family when you love your family. The spirit of Christmas comes to your household when you love your family. The spirit of Christ Jesus is with you when you cherish these friends.

Now then take that real human experience and consider it in all its widest implications. You receive the spirit of God, and the Christ Child comes to you when your Church is looked upon by your heart as a family of God and a household of faith; and the spirit of Christ is born in your Church; and the South Church in Hartford becomes a Bethlehem of God. All members here are looked upon as one family. You love the membership of this Church as one household of faith. Consider this human reality in all its far-

flung implications: "All people that on earth do dwell" are members of one family. Here is the household of God, for God is the Father of all. When your attitude towards all races and kindred and men is the mood of sympathy and discernment and wise judgment, then the spirit of the Christ Child enters your world. Of course, you don't crowd Him out because you do not crowd out the members of your own family. When you do not crowd out the members of the household of God throughout the earth you are not crowding out the Christ; you are receiving Him, you are bringing Him in, and Christ is born unto the world. This room of Mary and Joseph is that room in your life which is called the room of the affections. This is the room consecrated to love; and when your love is that of Mary and Joseph, then you are able to receive Christ into your own dear family, into your own dear church, into your own dear country and this world of God. You say to these who are nearest and dearest to you, you say to your friend, husband or wife or lover—

"My friend, my bonny friend, when we are old,
And hand in hand go tottering down the hill,
May we be rich in love's refined gold;
May love's gold coin be current with us still.

May love be sweeter for the vanished days,
  And your most perfect beauty still as dear
As when your troubled singer stood at gaze
  In the dear March of a most sacred year.

May what we are be all we might have been,
  And that potential, perfect, Oh, my friend,
And may there still be many sheafs to glean
  In our love's acre, comrade, till the end.

And may we find, when ended is the page
  Death but a tavern on our pilgrimage."

Then even that inn which we call death may have the spirit of the manger when the love subsisting between you is the love of Mary and Joseph, when the friendship between you is of such a character that not even death can break.

What is the first room in your life into which you will admit the spirit of Jesus? Even the room of the affections, the room of Mary and Joseph.

2. Here is the second group before the manger. It is the group called the wise men. They have seen His star in the east; they have come to worship Him. They see a little child; they kneel before Him and they give Him presents—gold, frankincense and myrrh. So God comes to you as He came to people then, in no strange, miraculous ways but simply through your hu-

manity. Mary and Joseph mean that God comes to you when you love; the wise men mean that God comes to you when you think. Here is the room of the mind, a chamber dedicated to meditation and thought and deep reflection and sacred visions and holy remembrances. This was the room through which the wise men came to Jesus. They made room for Him in their thinking; they made room for Him in their minds. And God will come to you when you make room for Him in your thinking. What did their thinking mean? It meant in the first place that they were true to the star. These men had a light and they followed it. They followed it from far-off countries. They left all and followed the star. They made room for Jesus.

Now that experience is open and possible before everyone in this house. You have your star; you have your light. The Star of Bethlehem is the light within you. The light within you is the spirit of God, divine and holy and sure. Follow that light. Make room for that light. And you will come to God and God will come to you. You read in the New Testament about the unpardonable sin. The unpardonable sin is the deliberate refusal to follow that gleam, the deliberate refusal to obey that inner light, the deliberate re-

fusal to obey that inward voice. The unpardonable sin is allowing the darkness within you to crowd out the light. The unpardonable sin is this destruction of your own personality. You come to God and God comes to you when, like the wise men, you make room for Him in your thought and follow that light within you which is the very source of all your intellectual life.

And when they came to Bethlehem what after all did they find? A little child; and the child of peasants. A little child; the offspring of a despised race. But they were wise men; they saw through this humanity the promise of a divine manhood. God comes to you and you come to Him through your thinking when you are able to see in your humanity the possibilities of a divine life. You see that most easily in those nearest to you because you love them. You see it with difficulty in those more remote. It is hard for you to see the divine possibilities in many races, in many countries of God's family; but the wise man will make so much room for the spirit of God in his thinking that he will find in some measure and in some degree the divine and holy light in all peoples of the earth.

What is the second room in your life? It is the room of the wise men. Make room for Him in

your thinking and you will find that the spirit of Christmas comes to you.

3. There is a third group which is the group of the shepherds. They also make room for Jesus. These are the men of Israel; they are the workers on the hills of Judea; they cherish the hope of Israel; they work and they hope. Now they symbolize the great majority of people. The great majority of people have to work—some with their hands, some with their brains, some in the factory and some in the bank, some in the office, some in the school—the great multitude has to work. The shepherds symbolize that class and many, many workers have not much opportunity for reading and for studying. Like the shepherds, they are tired when the day's work is over. But these shepherds made room for the great hope of Israel; and no one works so hard today but what he can make room for the hope of Christianity. Your Christianity is a religion of hope; it is the conservation of hope. And you are good workmen, shepherds of Jesus Christ when you always make room for the hope of Bethlehem in all your toil. These men made room and so they came to Christ and Christ came to them. Make room for Him in your labor; make room for Him in your toil; make room for Him

in your business, in your studies, and you will find God coming to you and you will come to God. This is Christianity—God living within you. This is the spirit that He desires from everyone in this house; not the spirit of the inn, which crowded Him out, but the spirit of the manger, which made room for Him in love, like Mary and Joseph; which made room for Him in the mind, like the wise men from the east; which made room for Him in work, like the shepherds of Judea.

You are the tabernacles of God. God dwells with you and in you; that is Christianity; that is the religion of Jesus; and when that spirit dwells in you and in all the rooms of your life, then you are coming to the reality of His great plan for you.

What is the difference between the life of Jesus and the lives of most people? The life of Jesus was altogether given to God. Every room in His life was filled with the glory of God: the room of love, the room of thinking, the room of toil—all these rooms were filled with the spirit of His heavenly Father. And when Christian people, His disciples and His followers, also fill these rooms with the spirit that was in Christ their master, then their lives begin to take on the

glory that men saw in the face of Jesus. The tragedy in many households in our city today is this: no room for Jesus. He is crowded out. The glory in many households in our city is this: room for Him in all the activities and the interests of life. Let the spirit of Jesus be made visible this week. You are coming to Christmas, to this Holy Festival, as to the spring and fountain from which all our Christian interests flow. Look, then, for your parable in the great river running through our city. It speaks to us in Hartford, of deep floods, and ships, and oceans and we hear in this city last whispers of the tides. But way beyond this city, in the hills, afar off, is the spring. It is quiet; it is clear; it is clean. If you look into the spring you can see the reflection of your face; and the image of the sun. Now then, Christianity is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God. We see it throughout the year in flood and freshet bearing the freight of humanity, carrying on its waters the tides from the far-off deep to which all travelers sail. But at Christmas time we see the spring. On Christmas Day we turn to the fountain of this living water. That spring is the spirit of Jesus Christ. Looking into that pure life you see the image of the Father. Everyone in this house, as a follower of

the Lord Jesus Christ, is in like measure a spring of life, a fountain of life, from which spring and fountain flow the activities and the interests which make your family, your Church and your city. When that spring is clear so that men, looking into it, may see the glory of God, when that life which is yours, is as "clean as river sand," so that men, looking into it, see something of the glory of God, then you have the spirit of Bethlehem and you have made room for Christ. When that spring is trodden under foot so that men, looking into it, see nothing of the glory of God, then it simply means that you have crowded Him out and there is no room for Him there. Remember that the glory of the Christmas Day is simply making room for Jesus. Remember that the tragedy of the Christmas week is allowing the interests of this life to crowd Him out. Remember there was no room for Him in the inn. Remember, also, there was room for Him at the manger, because those who loved, loved Him; and those who thought, thought moreover upon Him; and those who worked, hoped also in Him.

PRAYER

Almighty and all merciful God, our heavenly Father, we beseech Thee with all earnestness and

sincerity to bring the members of this congregation to that Bethlehem which is free, which is here, which is nigh unto all those who love and think and work. Bring us, we pray Thee, by these appointed paths unto the true keeping of Thy holy feast, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

IMMORTALITY [1]

"There was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt . . . but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings."—*Exodus 10 : 22, 23.*

THE subject which is announced on the *Calendar* this morning is a large subject on which I have ventured to speak with trembling, and yet it is a subject on which one must speak in these weeks of Lent before we come to Easter; and the text I have selected brings before you in dramatic contrast the two ideas which have always struggled for the dominion of men. One is symbolized by darkness and one is symbolized by light. We have always spoken of death in terms of darkness and night and the valley of shadows. We have always spoken of this life and the life to come in terms of light, a world where there is no darkness, neither shadow of darkness.

[1] The material in this sermon is taken largely from the books by William James and George A. Gordon. To their books I am altogether in debt for the thoughts and words of this sermon; and to their teaching, and friendship, and example, I owe much in faith and courage.

And what a contrast you have in this text between the very words "Egypt" and "Israel." Egypt has always been the land of death; the Nile is murmuring today of tombs and sepulchres and death. Egypt is and has been the land of the closed tomb. Canaan is and has been the land of the open tomb. Egypt speaks to us of death; Canaan speaks to us of life. No minister and no human being in his attempt to speak for immortality or the world to come would think for a minute of minimizing the experience of death. No sober person who has passed through that sorrow would think for a minute of minimizing that experience. Everyone here who has known what death means knows that it suggests to them, for a time at any rate, the thick darkness of Egypt. But the Christian and the Christian Church pass through the thick darkness of Egypt into the light of Canaan, into the light of holy land. We do not minimize the darkness; we know the sorrow; we know the grief; we know the pain. But in the words of George Fox: we see not only the ocean of darkness but an ocean of light spreading over the ocean of darkness. I ask you, therefore, in all humility to listen to a few words this morning in a reasonable argument for immortality. I take it on this Sun-

day in Lent because you cannot argue on Easter Sunday. Easter Sunday is the day of Resurrection; it is the day for singing, and triumph; it is the day of victory; it is the day for praise and not for argument. You cannot argue on Easter Sunday any more than you can argue on your wedding day. That is the day for singing, for rejoicing; or else for escaping to the hills and fleeing away. The time for argument has passed.

Today I ask you to listen to several of the great arguments in defense of immortality. There is nothing original in what I have to say. I simply give you this morning some results of the reading I have done in the books on this subject; and I refer you also to the rich and accessible material written on this great question. I bring before you what the old-fashioned divines were accustomed to call a doctrinal sermon. The issue is between death and life. The debate is between darkness and light. The conflict is between Egypt and Canaan. The question is this: Is there any permanence in human personality beyond death? The question is this: Does our human life extend beyond the experience we call death?

Now a very striking fact in our experience today is that this doctrine of Christianity is open

to question on the part of a great many people. Many are indifferent. Some find it very hard to believe. Many find that the old arguments do not hold water and they ask for new and reasonable assurance.

I shall venture then this morning, as I plead for light and not darkness, as I argue for life and not death, to speak first of all of two great objections to immortality, and then of four great reasons for a belief in immortality.

The two objections that are usually brought forward in denial of immortality are these: first, "the apparent connection between our spiritual life and the brain," "the apparent fact that our body and soul go together." Professor James in his great lecture on immortality takes up this objection first of all. It is interesting to note that he, a man who has specialized in the study of the brain, finds there is here no reasonable objection; because the function of the brain does not necessarily hold in its grip all that we call the spirit or the soul. As a psychologist and as a logician he finds it perfectly possible and perfectly reasonable to hope or expect, or believe, that after the soul has left this present body it will find another body. It is just as unreasonable to say that when the steam kettle is broken the

steam is lost forever. There is no reasonable objection in the statement that the body and the soul necessarily seem to go together. As far back as the days of Plato men considered it logical, possible at any rate, that the soul might find another body. In the words of Christianity God has given us a body as it has pleased Him and it is perfectly possible for Him to give us another body.

The second great objection which William James considers, the one which probably weighs most with people is this: the innumerable company of people who will live forever. Phillips Brooks considers this the greatest objection to a belief in immortality. Our modern world has opened up illimitable dwelling-places and inhabitants. Just stop and think, if you believe in immortality, of the number of people who therefore will live forever, the millions and millions and millions who have lived upon this earth. It palls upon the imagination. It crushes the mind. And many people find this thought so heavy, so massive, so colossal that immortality seems to them incredible and impossible.

In the days of our forefathers when the world was looked upon as a universe dating from only about 4000 B. C., then the future world con-

sidered as a dwelling-place in joy eternal was only the habitation of the elect. The great weight of numbers was not present. The future world seemed "a comparatively snug affair." It was the dwelling-place of "heroes, kings, ecclesiarchs, and saints." It was not a large number. But our modern thinking has opened up innumerable multitudes.

Well, the answer to that statement is simply this: God is infinite and we are finite. When the finite mind thinks of the innumerable multitudes of people it sickens and faints; but when you think of God as infinite—infinite love, infinite wisdom, infinite justice, then over against that infinity it makes no difference how many millions of people have lived—so infinite is that love, that it needs all people that ever have lived in order to satisfy that divine affection; so infinite is that love that it needs all the millions of people that ever will come after us in order to answer its infinite affection, so infinite is that heavenly light that we can think of it holding up and gathering, encompassing and receiving not only the life that we call human, but all manner and all kinds of life. There is no reasonable objection here when one holds over against the

mass of human life the great idea of infinity. So much then for the objections.

Now, then, let us think of four reasonable arguments in defense of our belief in immortality. They are as follows: First, the moral perfection of God; secondly, the moral character of God's world; thirdly, the moral character of humanity; and last of all, the moral perfection of Jesus Christ.

1. First, the moral perfection of God. I believe in immortality because I believe God is infinitely good. I believe in immortality because I believe God is morally perfect. The moral perfection of God is a postulate; it is something that we take for granted; it is not anything that you or I or anybody can prove. We cannot make the demonstration and end it with the letters q. e. d. But it is a necessary postulate. We simply cannot believe in a God unless He is perfectly good. Can you believe in a God who is not infinitely good? Can you worship a God who is not morally perfect? The world in which we live would not be a dwelling-place for a sane people unless we postulated the moral perfection of God. That we take for granted. Many people do not think about it. Multitudes do not even refer to it, but

there is the background for all reasonable living; there is the background for all reasonable thinking—the moral perfection of God.

Now, then, postulating that God is morally, perfectly, infinitely good, the Father of all men, how can He destroy His children? How can a perfectly good God who has brought us into this world, crash us and break us in what we call death? It is absolutely contradictory to the idea of a morally perfect God. It is absolutely contradictory even to the idea of an imperfect humanity. We call that father and mother insane, who destroy their own children. We expect them to love to the utmost. "If ye then, being evil, know how to do good, how much more your Heavenly Father." If once you postulate that God is perfect, if once you assume that He is morally perfect, how then can He destroy His own children in what we call death?

I believe in immortality, therefore, because I must believe in a morally perfect God. I believe that God is not the thick darkness of Egypt, but of light eternal, and therefore in the dwelling-places of Canaan there is light.

2. The second argument is the moral character of God's world. We believe that this world is a moral world; we believe that is reasonable.

This is more than an assumption; this is more than a postulate; this is open to proof. We can prove that the world in which we live is a reasonable world. We build our business on that. We assume that the men with whom we deal are reasonable beings. We construct our science, geology, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, philosophy and psychology on the understanding that the world in which we live is reasonable. All our life is built on the great assumption that this order is a moral order, that this world is a reasonable world. We reap what we sow; we gather through a reasonable expectation the fruit of what we have planted. When we plant potatoes we have a reasonable expectation that we will harvest potatoes and not flowers. When we plant wickedness we have a reasonable expectation that we will harvest sorrow and grief and shame. When we plant righteousness we have a reasonable expectation that we will harvest peace and justice and righteousness. It is a reasonable world. Here of course the people will speak of earthquakes and fires and famine. Yes, there is a thick darkness of sorrow and destruction; but these are the exceptions and not the rule. The rule is light and the exception is darkness. The rule is that you reap what you sow. On the whole

the character of the world, in which we live, is moral. That was the issue in the Great War. One party in that direful debate insisted that the world was not moral. They declared that honor could be violated, righteousness could be scorned, and through this contemptuous disregard of the moral fibre of the universe, victory could be secured. We stood and the Allies stood on the issue that the world in which we live was moral. The great debate of the War was this: Is the world governed by darkness or by light? And when it came to the fighting point how many of you here believed that the world was governed by the darkness of Egypt and the closed tomb, and not by the light of Canaan and the open tomb? You believe that the character of this world was moral; you believed it so firmly that you would have died and died gladly rather than have anyone trample on you and your country. The reasonable character of your world is a great argument for a belief in immortality. We believe in immortality because we believe in the moral character of the world.

3. The third great argument is the moral character of humanity. We believe that human beings are partly good and partly bad; but we Christians devoutly believe that the dominant

passion in humanity is goodness. The character of humanity is moral. Can we, therefore, imagine a God whom we have thought of as infinitely good taking these human beings—whose sovereign character, however much they have marred it, however much they have broken it, is still of the goodness of God—can we think of Him as taking these human beings and throwing them into the scrap heap of darkness and a great oblivion? What would you think of a father if he were to take this darling child of his and consign it to such a fate? We think of such a person as breaking all the relations of humanity. We simply could not treat our own children in that way. Will, then, the infinite God, infinitely wise and just, take us, even with all our frailties and sins and wrongs, and leave us forever in a great darkness? Even as long ago as the days of Plato thinking men came to this conclusion: "The moral of the whole story, Simmias, is this: that we should do all that we can to partake of virtue and wisdom in this life. Fair is the prize, and the hope great. Not that I insist upon all the particulars of my tale—no sensible man would; but that it or something like it is true concerning our souls and their mansions after death. Since we are agreed that the soul is immortal, this, it

seems to me, is a proper opinion and enough to justify some venture of imagination in a believer. For the venture is noble; and it is right to relate such things, and fortify oneself."

Seven years ago I was standing in the house of Sir Walter Scott in Abbotsford. I felt the presence of the great romanticist; I felt his heroic life and heroic death, and I remembered those noble words which Lockhart gives us in his life, saying that "on Thursday morning, September 13, 1832, Nicholson came in and told me that his master wished to see me. I went immediately and found his eye calm and clear and the wild fire of delirium extinguished. 'My dear,' he said to me, 'Be a good man, be virtuous, be religious. Nothing else will help you when you come to lie here.' "

The character of humanity is moral and nothing else will help us when we pass through the thick darkness but that consciousness of having been good, virtuous and religious.

> "Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
> Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
> Dispraise, or blame, nothing but well and fair,
> And what may quiet us in a death so noble."

I believe in immortality because I believe in the moral character of men and women. I be-

lieve in the good man, and, therefore, I believe in immortality.

4. Last of all, the moral perfection of Jesus Christ. This is the greatest argument that the Christian has. He has the words of Jesus, but above all, he has the life of Jesus. You have all heard the familiar statement: Socrates argued for immortality, but Jesus lived immortality. Jesus takes immortality for granted. Jesus lives the endless life. He practices the power of the life everlasting: He assumes it; He lives it; He takes it for granted. The Christian man feels that in Jesus Christ somehow he has come to the thought of God; he feels that in the life of Jesus he has come as through a door-way into the very thought of God; he feels it; he feels that this life is not the end; he feels that because he has known and loved the Lord Jesus that death is only an open door and his feelings are like great divine instincts which he can trust. He feels in Jesus Christ that he has come to a character that is infinite, eternal and everlasting. His greatest argument is the life of Jesus.

Here then are four great arguments for you. You can say I believe in a morally perfect God, therefore I believe in immortality. I believe in a morally reasonable world, therefore I believe in

immortality. I believe in a moral humanity, therefore I believe in immortality. I believe in the perfect man, the Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, I believe in immortality. The whole question is moral; it all revolves upon the character of God; it all revolves upon the old debate between darkness and light. Is the world the thick darkness of Egypt, or is it the light of a holy land? Is the universe moral or immoral? It is far more than a question of whether we have an extension of personal existence; it is a great warfare between two systems of thought. Either the universe is moral, or it is immoral. And we stand on the great hope, we build our life on the great faith that our God is infinitely good, that our world is possibly good, that our humanity is possibly good, that in Jesus Christ our humanity and our world have reached the perfection of the infinite Father.

What, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter? Even this: live nobly now, because now is the life everlasting. Live nobly now, because even now is the life immortal. You don't begin immortality in death; you have begun immortality already. We do not say as they said in olden time, "You will live forever because you are noble." We say, "Live nobly now because you

live forever. Live nobly now because now is the judgment, now is the life eternal, now is the presence of God nigh unto you." You are called upon to go step by step today and tomorrow as those who are already in the immortal world. For this you are sent.

"That thee is sent, receyve in buxumnesse,
The wrastling for this worlde axeth a fal,
Her nis non hoom, her nis but wildernesse.
Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beste, out of thy stal!
Know thy countree, look up, thank God of al;
Hold the hye wey, and lat thy gost thee lede,
And trouthe shal delivere, it is no drede."

"Everlasting! everlasting! everlasting! everlasting!" is the word of the Christian; everlasting is the grace of God; everlasting is the mercy of God; everlasting is the love of God, no matter how thick the darkness of Egypt, no matter how heavy the pain, no matter how grievous the sin. Everlasting is the mercy of God, everlasting is the love of God, everlasting is the life of man.

"Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beste, out of thy stal!
Know thy countree, look up, thank God of al."

Even so we go forth, pilgrims and sojourners as all our fathers were, looking for the city which

hath the foundations whose maker and builder is God. And because we thank God, because we know our country, because we are forth-faring pilgrims, and because we see Jesus, therefore we can sing this morning: "In the Heavenly Kingdom the souls of the saints are rejoicing, who followed the footsteps of Christ, their Master; and since for love of Him they freely poured forth their life blood, therefore, with Christ they reign forever and ever."

"Holy is the true light and passing wonderful, lending radiance to them that endured in the heat of the conflict; from Christ they inherit a home of unfading splendor, wherein they rejoice with gladness evermore."

The light wins; the darkness loses. The light in the dwellings of the children of Israel, is mightier than the thick darkness of Egypt. The land of the open tomb is a truer description of life than the land of the closed tomb. The light of the world outlasts and outlives the darkness of this world. We believe that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all; we believe that this world is light and darkness, but that the light conquers the darkness; we believe that we are children of the light, and so even the darkness may become light about us; we believe that

Jesus is the Light of the world: and therefore we believe in immortality.

"The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until death tramples it to fragments."

PRAYER

Almighty and all merciful God, Lord of life and God of the living, deliver us from all fear of the thick darkness of death, and grant that there may be light in all our dwellings. Help us to walk in the way of Thy commandments; so that when we come to our appointed hour we may go as brave men and brave women, trusting in Thy everlasting love, Thy everlasting grace, Thy everlasting mercy. *Amen.*

MORAL GRANDEUR IN A DARK DAY

"One calleth unto me out of Seir: 'Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?'

"And the watchman said: 'The morning cometh.' "—*Is. 21 : 11, 12.*

THIS text is taken from the ancient prophecy of Isaiah, a short verse with a poetic touch, with something of the gleam of the morning and something of the darkness of night. The prophet is thinking of the people of Edom. They have been suffering. They have suffered so much that the prophet gives to their land the graphic description "The Land of Silence," "The Land of the Silence of Death"—broken only by one cry, one voice and only one, crying in the night: "Watchman, what of the night?"

George Adams Smith says that literally this phrase is translated "How much of the night is passed?"; "What from off the night?"; a pathos that we miss in our English version. The people in their ancient country are asking the prophet "How much of the night is gone?" "How much

of the night has passed away?" And the prophet answers: "The morning cometh." "The morning is come."

That text brings me to my subject this morning: "Moral Grandeur in a Dark Day"—for we too have entered somewhat into the meaning of the land of silence. The great guns are quiet now; their lips no longer speak in Flanders and in France; the shouting and the tumult pass away; something of the ecstasy and the enthusiasm that were yours has departed; you know something of the meaning of silence. Some families in this parish know something of the meaning of the silence of death. The newspapers every day bring us echoes and reports of dark days throughout the country; and there is a tendency, I think, on the part of many people to feel now, even as they did in days of war, something of despondency, something of despair; and there is the need now, as there was then, to feel the moral grandeur of God in a dark day as well as in sunny weather. Once more I think the cry comes from the hearts of people: "Watchman, how much of the night has passed away?" And the answer of the watchman is: "The morning is come."

On Sunday morning, July 19, 1914, I was

worshipping in St. Paul's Cathedral, in London. Only two weeks away was the war, and no one dreamed—at least we in the congregation never imagined—that a great war was only a fortnight away from England. Canon Rawnsley was preaching on "home." He brought to us in a most vivid and beautiful way the home life of Jesus and what ought to be the home life of every Christian family. And when we walked out of the cathedral I saw on the walls of the nave a great painting by Watts. There was a background of black. Against that background of black a woman was sitting on a chair. On her knees was a dead child. She was looking forward into the future. And underneath were these words: "Watchman, what of the night?" Little did I know, and little did I imagine, that this picture was to typify and express the hearts and the longings of many people in four years to come. Little did I think that Europe was to sit with a child upon her knees, saying to her prophets: "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?"

What, then, is this light whereof the prophets speak? What is this morning which the watchman proclaims? This is the answer: you are the morning. Jesus, your Master, said: "Ye are the

light of the world." You Christian people are the morning. In you is the light that was in Jesus. In your presence here is the presence of the spirit of Christ. The morning has come, because you are here. The light has come, because you Christian people are in the world; and as you let your light shine, so does the night pass away and the morning come.

Do you remember that phrase of Robert Louis Stevenson in which he calls upon us to have morning faces? Christian people are those who have morning faces. Their faces are turned toward the light, the light that was in Jesus, the light of the Cross, the light of the Resurrection, the light of His words; and that light, shining on your faces, gives you what the poet called "The morning face."

1. How will you bring this morning? First of all, you will be as the morning *when you have a steady mind*. He shall keep you in perfect peace when your mind is stayed on Him. This is the word of Peter, that I read to you this morning: "Brace up your minds, keep cool, and put your hope for good and all in Jesus Christ." Brace up your mind! Steady your mind! Gird up the loins of your mind! Peter is using throughout the figure of speech that was familiar to him in his

life as a fisherman. When the Master called to him from the shore, he girded up his garments, belted his coat and leaped from the boat into the water. So he says Christian people must belt up their minds, gird up the loins of their intellect, roll back the sleeves of the mind and make the mind work and think and ponder until that mind is stayed on Jesus Christ. And when a mind is so steadied, so stayed, having a foothold of faith in the steady mind of Jesus Christ, then Christian people become the morning of the world. The night is the time of shadows and darkness, and dark dreams, and ghosts and spectres, but when the morning comes then comes steadiness.

Christian people who have a mind stayed on Jesus Christ, girded up and belted into His divine intellect, are those who bring the steadiness of the morning. That is the first element of moral grandeur in a dark day.

When a soul concentrates on eternity, belting up its mind, girding its intellect, then what matters whether death comes to you today or tomorrow? What matters, then, whether death comes to you in the house or on the street? What matters, then, whether you are rich or poor?

You have lifted up the mind through a vision of the eternities, and your mind is steady.

That is one of the great messages that death always brings to a family. For a moment, for a twinkling, the family is compelled to concentrate upon the thought of the eternities; and the trivial incidents, the petty accidents of every day, pass away, and the mind is steady, because it has been lifted up; and the people of the family bring the morning and the light, because their mind is stayed on the eternities. Let that mind be in you, that was also in Jesus Christ, our Lord, and the night will pass away, and the morning will come.

2. In the second place, you will be as the morning, bringing moral grandeur in a dark day, when you have the serene spirit that was in Jesus Christ—Serenity. Peter always speaks of it as "keeping cool." The New Testament uses the word "sober," "sober unto prayer." Literally, the word means "calm," "collected," "not drunken," "not trembling," "not staggering," but "cool." The cool head comes to those who have that serenity that was in Jesus Christ.

Again, think once more of Cardinal Mercier. He lived in a day of uproar and tumult, woe and

wrath; and yet there was the cool head; calm, collected judgment. Those are wonderful words that he wrote:

"When in 1930 we look back to the dark years of 1915 and 1916, we shall count them the brightest and the most majestic, and, if we resolve that they shall be so, the happiest days in the national history of Belgium." *Per crucem ad lucem—from the cross flashes forth the light; from the sacrifice comes the light.*"

Let this spirit be in you that was also in Jesus Christ our Lord; a soul, serene and sure, because it is confident of God.

3. In the third place, you will be as the morning when you put your hope for good and all in Jesus Christ. Gird up the loins of your mind, keep cool, and put your hope for good and all in Jesus Christ. Strange place to put your hope, for you are putting it in the invisible. Strange place to put your hope, for you cannot touch it with your hands. Some will say there is no sense in putting your hope for good and all in Jesus Christ; some will say it is a stumbling block; and some will say it is an offense. Yet there is the Christian Gospel. The morning cometh when people put their hope for good and all in Jesus Christ. All we have to do is to try it, even as it

has been tried in twenty Christian centuries, even as it was tried by Cardinal Mercier: to put our hope for good and all in Jesus Christ. That is the reason why he called to his people again and again to come to mass, to come to mass. That is the reason why every Christian minister in this country, if he wishes to have moral grandeur in a dark day, must call his people, like a bell that never ceases to ring, "Come to church," "Come to worship God," "Come to pray to God," "Come to give yourself to God"; for when you come to church in that spirit, when you come to give yourself to God, you proclaim God, you speak God, you make God, as it were, so that there is more of God in your city, more of light and therefore of moral grandeur in a dark day.

This is the cry of the world: "Watchman, what of the night?" This is the reply of the Church of Christ: "The morning cometh." The morning light is here. You are the morning. You are the light of the world. You are the morning light when you have a mind stayed in the mind of Christ; when you have a soul, serene and sure, because it is confident of God; when you have a heart of hope, because it is in constant communion with the Holy Spirit. A steady mind, a

cool head, and the passionate heart of hope!—and so the morning comes.

Let this be our message: The night passes away, the morning comes. Let this be our resolve: More light in the living epistles of God, than darkness in the daily papers of men. Let this be our word: brace up your minds, keep cool, and put your hope for good and all in Jesus Christ. Let this be our word concerning earth and heaven; of earth, that though it is both day and night, yet the day can be longer than the night, and that depends on you; of heaven, that there is no night there, for that depends on God.

Remember that when Christiana and her children and the pilgrims, came through Enchanted Ground, they were led by Great Heart, and immediately under his charge they placed Mr. Feeblemind; and the rear-guard was led by Valiant, and immediately under his eye they placed Mr. Despondency, and so they came through their darkness into morning light.

PRAYER

Our Heavenly Father, guard the Church of Christ in all dark days from despondency. Help us to be valiant and great-hearted. Help us so to

fight like good soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ, that Thy spirit, even the spirit that was in Jesus, shall cleave to our spirit and the twain shall be one. So bless us, and strengthen us, and make us children of the light with morning faces. *Amen.*

RECEIVING A PROPHET

"He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward."
—*Matt. 10 : 41.*

THESE words are spoken by Jesus. They relate to the disciples whom He is sending out in His work. Do they not also relate to you, His disciples who are sent out to do His will today? They describe the manner in which these men, bearing the prophetic gift of Jesus, shall be received: "in the name of a prophet." They describe the manner of the reward given to those who receive these disciples of Jesus: "the reward of a prophet." There is your text for Palm Sunday.

We are all familiar with the Scripture story connected with this day in the history of Jesus. We are familiar with the incidents relating to that entrance; the crowd shouting "Hosanna!" the little children singing; the Master gazing with indescribable understanding upon that city.

What does it all mean to us? Of course it means far more to us than an historical event.

No Christian church is deeply concerned with commemorating simply the things of the past. The past is dead. "Let the dead bury the dead!" What does it mean to us? Surely this: "the Divine Aggression." Christianity, if it means anything, means the spirit of God as it was in Jesus Christ, steadily, irresistibly, continually, entering your life, entering your world, entering your civilization, entering your governments. Christianity, if it means anything, means the continual and irresistible entrance of law and decency and order and righteousness and holiness into the fabric of this world. Christianity, if it means anything, means that this continual entrance of law and righteousness and holiness—however thwarted, however crucified, however misunderstood with shouting Hosannas and singing Hallelujahs—Christianity means that this spirit that was in Jesus will at last in God's time conquer the world.

There is the backbone of morale. It is necessary in time of peace, as well as in time of war, to speak again and again about the morale of our people and our country. In the words of Professor Hocking, "morale is the temper of the people expressing itself in action, in war and in reconstruction." The backbone of morale, so far

as you Christian women and men are concerned, is the steady consciousness that the spirit that was in Jesus is forever and irresistibly entering your world. No matter how any aristocrat, called a kaiser, may attempt to block and crucify it, it will in the long run win. No matter how any tyrant, called a proletariat, may attempt to break, and rob, and kill, it will in the long run win. Robbery is robbery, and murder is murder, whether committed by a kaiser or by a class called a proletariat.

The entrance of God in this world is the entrance of righteousness and holiness and justice and compassion and kindness and love—which is the fulfillment of all. The entrance of the spirit that was in Jesus into our lives! There is our work!

How can we make Him triumphant? How can we make every day a Palm Sunday, the day of the triumphant entry of the spirit of Jesus into our world?

1. First, we can make the spirit of Christ triumphant when we receive Him. "He that receiveth a prophet." There is the first act, and there is the heart of religion. The heart of religion and the heart of Christianity is in the act of self-committal. This is the simplest covenant,

this is the simplest creed, that everyone here can repeat, "I commit myself to God." "I commit myself to God!" That is the word of one who receives the prophetic spirit of God—"He that receiveth a prophet."

Who is he? He is the man who stands for law and honor and righteousness. He is the man who stands for the compassion and kindness and goodness of Jesus Christ. Receiving Jesus, committing yourself entirely to Him, means that you take Him as your companion. It means that in the morning and in the evening you give yourself to Him. It means that the standard of your life is a standard of truth. It means that the mood of your disposition is not self-pity, but self-sacrifice. It means that the spirit of your life is not the spirit of selfishness but unselfishness.

It means that you have committed yourself to God.

2. In the second place, if we want to make Christ triumphant, we must receive Him absolutely, "in the name of a prophet." He that would receive a prophet must receive Him in the name of a prophet. He that would receive the prophetic spirit of Jesus must receive Him in the name of Jesus Christ.

What does that mean? in the name of a

prophet? It means in the name of Isaiah; in the name of Amos; in the name of Ezekiel; in the name of Jeremiah; in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. It means "going all the way"; it means "absolute"; it means that your Christianity is not to be partial, conditional and in the nature of a compromise; not in your name; not in the name of your mother's Christianity; not in the name of your ancestors' religion. In the name of a prophet! Wipe out your name; wipe out your selfishness. Receive Him in the name of the prophet Jesus Christ. It means going all the way.

Can you not see that there is the very stuff out of which a morale must be made? How far would an army go if the spirit of the regiments was the spirit of compromise and conditional acceptation and partial allegiance? How far would we have gone towards victory if these Connecticut regiments had said they would go as far as Camp Devens; if these Massachusetts regiments had said they would go as far as New York; if half our army had said "we will go as far as England." It would never have been won if the disposition of the army had been partial, conditional and in the nature of a compromise. Would the Civil War ever have been won if all the men had

volunteered simply for three months, and had refused to fight even on the eve of a battle when their three months had expired? No war could be won, no task could be accomplished, if the spirit of the volunteers and workers is the spirit of those who enlist for three months, or a year, whose loyalty is in the nature of a condition, and whose allegiance is in the spirit of a compromise.

No more can the army of God win His kingdom upon earth if the Christianity of people is in the nature of a compromise and a condition. It means that we are to receive Him absolutely, in the name of a prophet; to receive Him absolutely, and not simply for Sunday morning, not simply for Palm Sunday, not only for these days of Lent, not only for this Easter Week. It means that we are to receive Him not simply in our homes, but everywhere and absolutely. It means that we are to receive Him not only in the standards of gentlemen and gentlewomen, but all the way to the standards of martyrs and apostles and disciples. That is what it means to receive Jesus Christ absolutely in the name of a prophet.

3. In the third place, if we want to make Him triumphant we must receive His spirit continually—the prophet's reward. "He that receiveth

a prophet in the name of a prophet shall have a prophet's reward."

What is the prophet's reward? Proverbially, and with a touch of satire, the reward of the prophet has often been called contumely, contempt, scorn, misunderstanding, stoning and crucifixion; and Jerusalem has become proverbial as the place where the prophets are killed and entombed and, years afterwards, are revered and followed.

Is that the prophet's reward? The cynic might say so. But this is truly the prophet's reward:—to have the spirit of Jesus continually within. Isn't that the truth? Isn't that the prophet's reward? Isn't that what everyone in this room would most truly desire? And isn't that what the prophet always has received—not always honor, not always admiration, not always respect, not always wealth and property? But "he that has received a prophet in the name of a prophet" has always received the dwelling of God with him, the residence of the spirit of Jesus with him, so that he could say: "I am alone, and yet not alone, for the Father is with me. I die, and yet I live, for there is something in me that cannot be killed. I live, and yet I die, for I die daily in order that I may live with God."

There is the prophet's reward:—to know that the spirit of Jesus is continually and increasingly entering his life. It is not enough to think that your Christianity is settled when you join the Church. It is not sufficient to think that your Christianity is accomplished when you have passed through a preparation or a confirmation class. It is not enough to think that you have done your work when you have taken your communion and entered into the fellowship of the Church. Christianity is a growth, and Christians should never cease growing in the wisdom, the power and the spirit that was in Jesus Christ. Your motto ought to be: "I never was so good as I have been today, and I hope never to be so bad again."

This is the spirit of the thought for you to think about on Palm Sunday; the adjustment of your soul to God: the adjustment of your world to God; for the spirit of God is entering your world, for the spirit of God is entering your life; and the question for everyone here this morning is the question of adjustment to that divine entrance.

Let this, therefore, be the word of your mouth this week: "I commit myself to God," for that is the word of one who receives the spirit of God

the Father. "I commit myself to God in the spirit of Jesus Christ," for that is the word of one who receives the spirit of God absolutely. "I commit myself to God, in the spirit of Jesus Christ, in order that the kingdom of God may come," for that is the word of the disciple who receives the spirit of God continually.

It is our duty, in these days of alliances and allies, to ally ourselves with the best in this world. The best in this world is the spirit of Jesus Christ making itself visible to those who have eyes to see, and audible to those who have ears to hear. Let this, therefore, be the word of your mouth this day: "I commit myself to God, in the spirit of Jesus, in order that the kingdom of Jesus may come."

PRAYER

Almighty and All-merciful God, our Heavenly Father, Thou who art entering our world, though we have not recognized Thee; Thou who art entering our life, though too often we have not seen Thee; open our eyes to see and our ears to hear, so that the kingdom of Jesus may come.

Amen.

A LIFE OF HOPE

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."—*I Peter 1 : 3.*

EASTER SUNDAY is a day dedicated to the Christian's faith in a life of hope. We are children of hope. Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, is the hope of God within us, our hope of glory.

The first Easter Sunday was for those men and women a great divide between an old world and a new world. One side of that division was hopelessness. "We hoped Jesus had been He who would have redeemed Israel." We hoped in Jesus; now He is dead. We hoped in Jesus; now He is buried. We hoped in a kingdom; and now we have gone back to Galilee, provincial of the provincials. On the other side of that great division is hope. From there on the New Testament rings with hope.

Is it a question of salvation? Then the spirit of the living Lord answers, "We are saved by hope." Is it a question of the disposition of the

evangel? Then the Easter message is, "Rejoicing in hope." Is it a question of Christology? Then the answer of the Easter Sunday is, "Christ in you, your hope of glory." Is it a question of faith? Then the reply is, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for." Is it a question of love—the heart of the gospel? Then the Easter reply is hope—"Love hopeth all things." Is it a question of life? Then the great answer of Easter is, "Life is a life of hope through the living Lord." Blessed, therefore, be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the life of hope through the resurrection.

The resurrection for us is the presence of the living Lord. Our God is not a dead God, buried in a tomb. The Lord Jesus Christ is living in you men and women, in your city, in your country, in your world.

We say, as Origen said centuries ago: "Neither we nor the scriptures assert that the resurrection of the body is the resurrection of this body of flesh, but the resurrection of a body spiritual and suited for the new environment into which the emancipated spirit enters." The resurrection means the living LORD, life abundant, glorious, strong, beautiful, framed in the grace of Jesus Christ, the Lord of life. A life of hope!

What are the sources of this Easter life of hope? What is the nature of this life of hope, promised us through the presence of a living Lord. First of all, a life of hope through the living Lord is established in a hope in God. "Hope thou in God." That is the first element in the fabric of the Easter message. "Why art thou cast down, Oh my soul?" "Why art thou disquieted within me?" "Hope thou in God, for thou art the health of my countenance." My hope in God enables me to face the darkness of this world, enables us to face the gloom and despair. What brought us through the deep waters of last year? What will bring us through the deep waters before us? Hope in God. Your character is measured by the character of your hope in God; and the deeper your hope in the Eternal, the stronger your hope for this world and the world to come. We hope in God, because our God is a living God. It is His purpose ruling in the world today.

It is His handwriting that at last we were able to read on the walls of the years. It is the living Lord that *has* wrought judgment in the kingdoms of this world. It is that living Lord who is even now preparing His pathways on the seas and on the continents. Our Lord is not entombed in creeds. He is not buried in the past. He is not

a formula in philosophy and theology. Our God, whom we love, who is the health of our countenance, in whom is our hope, is the living Lord in this world, whose purposes are the outlines of history which we endeavor to read and to put down on paper. Death has no terrors, therefore, for a man whose hope is in God.

What man here is afraid to die when he hopes in God? What woman here is afraid of death when her hope is in God? Hopelessness comes to those who are in sin and who feel the sting of sin. But a man whose hope is in God, whose world is in the purposes of God, whose history of his world is the history of his understanding of the will of God—this man is not afraid of death. He is freed from those fetters. He is not afraid to die. Far better to be thrown to wild beasts in the Coliseum, better to be burned with Joan of Arc, better to be burned with Ridley in Oxford, or in Smithfield at London, better to be hanged with Nathan Hale, better to have died in Flanders fields, than never to have had hopes, visions and dreams. And if a man does die with Joan of Arc, is burned in Oxford town, and today lies buried in the ooze of Flanders, such a man, having hoped and hoped against hope, a prisoner of hope, has lived as no man can live

who measures his life with houses and barns and fields and the boundaries of these estates.

A life of hope through the living Lord is established, in the second place, on a hope in yourself. No man can live unless he hopes in the validity of his own life. No man can live unless he hopes in the integrity of his own career. This Christian hope is established on the assurance that in every person—every man here, every woman, every boy and girl—there is a spirit, the spirit that was in Jesus Christ. There is the fountain of your existence; there is the residence of your true life. Buried within you is the spirit of Jesus; buried within you is the possibility of your better manhood and your better womanhood; buried within you, waiting to be awakened, waiting to be stirred into life, is the possibility of the divine lover, the divine disciple of God.

Höffding, a Danish philosopher, says that in the little church where he grew up as a boy, in Denmark, there was a place in the wall before which the people in that little parish church always stopped as they went up the aisle. They had stopped before that place in the wall for years, for generations. Yet why they stopped there, no one in that little country parish knew.

There was nothing on that spot in the wall of the parish church. Why did they stop and look at that place? One day they repaired the church. They took down the plaster from the wall of the old parish building, and there they found, buried by the plaster, laid down in the zeal of the Reformation, a shrine. Custom had bent the knee before that buried shrine.

It is exactly so, too often, in the lives of Christian men and women—Christian men and women here. They bow the knee of custom; they bend in propriety; they follow the traditional path of convention; never knowing that within them—buried, hidden, concealed, by these conventions and proprieties—is the spirit of God, the shrine of the eternal, only waiting to be discovered. What adventures might be known, what conquests for the kingdom, what glories for Jesus Christ, if every man and woman here practiced the discovery of Jesus Christ, hidden and concealed in the possibilities of their life. Death has no terrors for the man who makes this discovery. Death has no horror for the woman who has made this great adventure. They have found within them what Richard Crashaw found, the flaming heart, the heart that burns and is never consumed. They have found within them a

shrine from which they always receive help—the help from the indwelling God. These men know the hope of God, stored up in the spirit of God within them; and so, like David, they can lift up their flaming hearts and cry: "He will not come to me, but I shall go to him." They can lift up their flaming hearts, like Jeremiah, the prophet of a breaking country, and cry: "Blessed be the Lord God! Blessed be the Lord God! For my hope is in Him." They can lift up a flaming heart, as Peter did after Pentecost, and cry out: "Blessed be the Lord God and Father of all men, who hath born us again into a life of hope through the resurrection of Jesus." They can pass, like Paul, with a flaming heart, through the perils of land and sea, because they rejoice in hope. They can pass through the Civil War of the Seventeenth Century and cry out, like Henry Vaughan,

> "But I am sure thou dost now come
> Oft to a narrow, homely room,
> Where thou, too, hast the least part;
> My God, I mean my sinful heart."

And they can cry out, like the great poet of the Nineteenth Century:

> "I hope to meet my pilot face to face
> When I have crossed the bar."

A life of hope is established in the hope in yourself, the hope that within you is the buried treasure of a divine life.

And, in the third place, a life of hope through the resurrection is established on hope in other men. A man does not begin to hope in other men until he finds this hope of God within himself. And when he finds that his heart is the flaming heart that burns and never is consumed, then he begins to discover that in other men there is the same spark of celestial fire. That is the discovery which came to the men and women after Easter. That was the discovery which made Pentecost an open door into the brotherhood of the world. They discovered, and we have found ever since, that this same spirit which makes us hope in ourselves is also in other men—Jews and Greeks and Medes and Parthians, dwellers in Mesopotamia, Cappadocia, dwellers in America and Europe and Asia and Africa and the islands of the great oceans today. In every man, in every woman, there is the possibility of the life that was in Jesus Christ our Lord. Death has no terrors for men and women who belong to this brotherhood of the flaming heart.

All these would say if they had words to speak to us, "We kept the hope; we hoped that

help would come to us, and we hoped unto the end; we hoped that life would come to the world, and we hoped unto the end; we hoped that liberty would come to the kingdoms of this world, and we hoped unto the end." These kept the hope. And so, although they died, they live, a cloud of witnesses around the world today, a life of hope through the living Lord. This hope passes through deep waters and is never drowned. This hope is burned at the stake and is never consumed. This hope never flees, never turns backward, never retreats and when it falls, it falls to rise again. This hope is in the brotherhood of faith and love. Our faith is like a star when only one is shining in the night. Our love is like the perfect day, where there is no more darkness neither any more night. Our hope is the dawn between the starry night and the perfect day; a life of hope through the living Lord.

Up then you Christian people! and make every Sunday an Easter Sunday! Up from your sins! Up from your indifference! Up from the low levels of apathy! "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." "Where there is hope, there is life." Where there is hope in God, hope in yourself, hope in the other man, there is the life abundant.

PRAYER

Almighty and all-merciful God, our Heavenly Father, deliver us from that condition of existence where men and women abandon all hope, for Thou hast always hoped in us, Thou hast always hoped in our brothers, Thou hast always hoped in our world. Help us, we beseech Thee, to practise the hope of the over-ruling God. Help us to practise the hope of the indwelling spirit of God. Help us to practise the hope of eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory forever and ever, world without end. *Amen.*

GOD'S REMEMBRANCERS

"Ye that are God's remembrancers, take ye no rest. And give Him no rest till he hath established and made Jerusalem a praise in the earth."—*Is. 62 : 6.*

"YE that are God's remembrancers!" God's Remembrancers!

The men and women who remind the world of God—that is your name, that is your description as Christian people. You Christian people in the congregation, this morning, you men and women gathered under this roof—you are the people who remind the world of God; you are the disciples who remind the world of the Great Teacher. You are the members of the Church who remind the world of the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs. You are they who remind the world of God—God's remembrancers. What an astounding statement! What a glorious description! What a new name to be given unto members of the Church of Christ!

In what sense, then, are you remembrancers of God? In what manner do you remind the world of God?

In the first place, you are God's remembrancers, and you remind the world of God, when you look like Him. Men and women looking on the face of Jesus, when He walked this world and made His land a holy land, remarked in wonder and in joy that they saw reflected on His face the glory of God. Jesus reminded the world of God because He looked like a God. Dr. Glover, in his little book on *Jesus in History*, remarks that there is a family likeness between the Lord and Master and those who live like Him. There is a family likeness between those who have the spirit of Jesus in their hearts, and Jesus himself. Everyone here has seen and noticed this family likeness. Sometimes you have seen it in the faces of those who are officers of the Church; and sometimes you have seen it on the faces of those who are the hidden saints of God—the obscure, the unknown, members of the Church of Christ.

Here is a young man back from France, home once more in his university and in his family. He would be the last one to say that there was any family likeness between himself and the

Master of Men; and he would laugh with incredulity if anyone said that there was a family likeness between him and the Lord and Master of Men. And yet, there it is—irresistible, invincible. In the light of his countenance, in the very climate of his conversation, you notice in this young man a family likeness to the spirit of the Master. You are God's remembrancers, and you remind the world of God when you look like Him.

And, again, you are God's remembrancers, reminding the world of God, when you speak like Him. In the scripture lesson that I read this morning, we noted that the people who listened to Jesus marveled at the gracious words which proceeded from His mouth. He spoke like a God, and they were reminded of the Father of all men by the gentle, gracious, noble, wise words of Jesus. You remind the world of God when your words also are gracious and when your speech is the conversation of Jesus. When you avoid scandal and gossip and the stinging word, when you avoid the conversation of untruth and falsehood and all that is of the nature of injustice and unkindness, when you are gentle and not rude, when you are wise and not rough, when you are tolerant and yet not compromising, when you

are obedient and yet not harsh in your treatment of others, then in your speech you remind the world of God, and men and women take notice that you have been in the school of Jesus.

Again, you are God's remembrancers, and you remind the world of God, when you work like him. Men and women, looking upon Jesus when He walked this earth, noted with wonder and with awe the spirit of His labor. He worked as one who had a hidden source of strength. He labored as one to whom was given meat and drink whereof this world did not know. He worked like a God, and therefore they bowed their hearts and heads before Him. So you will remind the world of God when you, Christian men and women, work in the spirit of Jesus; and your city, taking notice of the way in which you work in office and in factory, in school and in business, will be reminded of the "Master of All Good Workmen."

Remember those wise words: "God buries His workmen, but He carries on His work." God buries His workmen, but He carries on His work through you; and the world will be reminded of God, and you truly will be God's remembrancers, when people, entering into your

office or your factory, see your good works and "Glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

Again, you will be God's remembrancers, reminding the world of God, when you worship like Jesus, your Master. How those disciples stood with reverence and with awe, with understanding hearts, before the worship of Jesus! He prayed all night; he worshipped God with the same diligence and fidelity with which He had worked in His carpenter shop. Here was a worship not of form, not of ceremony, not of liturgy and not of ritualism. Here was a worship essentially of sincerity and love and passion. So you will remind the world of God when you worship like Jesus; when your worship is not a matter of saying prayers or reciting words, but your worship in the home, in the Church and in the business, has that sincerity and love and passion that were present in the worship of Jesus—sincere without any cant or sham, love without any arrogance or snobbishness or superiority, passion without any indolence or ease in Zion. This made the worship of Jesus notable to His disciples. And you will remind the world of God, and surely be God's remembrancers, when you worship like Him, when you work like Him,

when you live with Him, hidden in God, so that the world notes that you look like Him.

There is an obligation attached to this high office of being God's remembrancers. The obligation is two-fold. First of all, "Take ye no rest." Those who remind the world of God—these are they to whom the stern high word comes, "Take ye no rest." There is no rest either for the weary. There is no rest for the sinful. There is no rest for the righteous. There is no rest possible for those who would remind the world of God. There is no lotus land for the soldiers of the Cross. There is no river of forgetfulness whose waters you could drink so that you could be at rest in this earth. Why? For the very simple reason that you are alive; for the very simple reason that you are living people. God's universe does not rest. His laws take no rest, no hours of ease, no moral holidays, no spiritual vacations. Just because you are alive and live in a world of life, you can take no rest, if you are to remind the world of God.

Of course I do not mean that one is to take no rest in the simple and common-sense meaning of recreation. Of course we all know that Jesus spoke to His disciples and told them to "Come apart and rest awhile." But it was not the rest

of indolence and of loafing, and forgetfulness, and folding of hands, and lying back on a couch of indifference and sleep. It was the rest by which their souls were knit up closely to God, so that they could do better work. It was the rest of character which enabled them to make for conduct. "Take no rest" means in plain, simple words that Christian people, if they are to be remembrancers of God, will be disciples who remind the world of the Master—in plain, simple words there is to be no indolence, no loafing and no sitting at ease in Zion.

A soldier in the midst of the battle cannot rest, unless it be in the spirit of the old warrior who said:

> "I'll lay me down and bleed a while,
> And then I'll rise and fight again."

There is no rest possible for an athlete in the middle of a race. There is no rest possible for a man in deep waters, in danger of sinking. There is no rest in that sense for the soldier of the spirit, for the athlete of God, for the Christians who go down into deep waters of life; there is no rest in the sense of indolence and sleeping and forgetting.

This is the deeper philosophy of the question:

God can only work through you; God can only work through men and women. Therefore you are to take no rest. That is the first obligation of being a remembrancer of God.

The second obligation is like unto it: Give him no rest; give God no rest. What an amazing phrase! At first thought how ridiculous and absurd! What do we mean by giving God no rest? It is comparatively easy to understand that if we are to remind the world of God we are to take no rest ourselves. But what do we mean by giving God no rest? Well, it is very easy to understand what we mean by giving God no rest when we are in great trouble, when sickness and death enter the house, when shame and sorrow come through the doorway. Then we give God no rest. We give Him no rest in what we cry to Him; we give Him no rest in our petitions. Isn't that so? Isn't that perfectly true? When you have been in great trouble or danger you have given God no rest, so far as your petitions and intercessions were concerned. Now if we are to remind the world of God, and if Christian men and women are to be God's remembrancers, we are to give Him no rest in all our relations to Him and in all connections of the soul with the Eternal. We are to give Him no rest in getting recruits for His

kingdom, so that He will be forever employed in distributing them in the places of necessity. We are to give Him no rest in our contributions, so that His angels will be forever busy in counting all our gifts. We are to give Him no rest in our adoration, so that, like a Heavenly Father, He will always be receiving from His children praise and love.

You know perfectly well that the father and mother, here on earth, desire to receive from their children, their sons and daughters, their expressions of trust and love and affection. The Heavenly Father desires to have no rest in receiving from you your praise and your adoration.

Give Him no rest in the allies that you bring to Him, in moral allegiance that you bring to Him, in the gifts you so generously pour out to His work, in the recruits that you bring into His armies of righteousness.

When you give God no rest in all this manifold manner, then you remind the world of God and truly you are God's remembrancers.

There is not only a two-fold obligation, but there is a reward—a goal. You are to take no rest, you are to give God no rest, "Till Jerusalem is established and made a praise in the earth." We will remind the world of God, and truly be

God's remembrancers, when with diligence and fidelity we keep always before us that goal, the kingdom of God on earth, the kingdom of Jesus in the kingdoms of this world.

There is a poem, written by one of the English poets, which cries out in singing words this desire of the unresting soul which will not cease from labor "Till Jerusalem is established in the earth":

> "Bring me my bow of burning gold,
> Bring me my arrows of desire;
> Bring me my spear; O clouds unfold!
> Bring me my chariot of fire.
> I will not cease from mental fight
> Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
> Till we have built Jerusalem
> In England's green and merry land."

There is the spirit of the unresting soul; there is the spirit of the remembrancer of God, who will not rest, who will not cease from mental fight, who will not take a moral holiday or spiritual vacation till God's Kingdom be established in this our Church, in this our city, in this our republic.

The words of the chapter I have read this morning, the words of the chapter which Jesus read in the little church at Nazareth, call for Christian people to awake.

"Awake! Oh watchmen of Zion; and cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; prepare ye the way of the people; lift up an ensign for the people"—because you are God's remembrancers.

You remind the world of God when you look like Him, when you speak like Him, when you work like Him, when you worship like Him, and, reminding the world of God, you take no hours of indolence, and you give God no respite from His labor—for that would lead you to the most awful tragedy in the world. What would be the most awful tragedy in a great battle? What would have been the most horrible tragedy in the great war? This: to have had all the soldiers of the Allies, all the soldiers of the armies of France and England and America and their Allies, desert their great commander, Marshal Foch, and leave him alone. Then he could take his rest, and he could take his rest with a vengeance. Then he could take his rest, and that rest would have been a hell on earth—because no one was present for him to work through, no soldiers for him to guide, no armies for him to direct. He could only work through his men; and if they all deserted him and left him, they would be giving him a rest with a vengeance.

Now, God can only work through you. That is as true as daylight, as plain as gospel. And if you desert Him, if you leave Him, you give Him a rest; and the rest that you give Him is the woe and the gloom and the death for which we have no words. Therefore give Him no rest. Come to his help! Be His allies! Be His good soldiers! Evermore be His good followers! Give God no rest till He hath established and made the Kingdom of Jesus a reality in the kingdoms of men.

PRAYER

Almighty and All-Merciful God, God of life and of love, whose laws never rest, whose sun and stars never depart from us, whose seasons never cease to visit us—in the dear visitation of springtime and of blossoms, in the glorious procession of summer days, in the solemnity of harvest months, in the austerity and ascetic glory of winter days—Thou who hast never ceased to visit us, Thou who hast given us no rest and even hast sent the Lord Jesus on this earth to remind us evermore of Thee, oh help Thy holy Church to remind the world of God. Send these men and women from this house to be God's remembrancers. Help them to remind the world of God,

so that those who live with them will be glad to come to Thee, to give to Thee, to worship Thee, to work with Thee. Shield us from indolence as from a great sin, and give us all the strength of Jesus. *Amen.*

THE POWER OF THE CHURCH

"Endued with power from high."
—*Luke 24 : 49.*

THIS text describes the change which, as you know, was characteristic of the disciples after their first Easter. They were endued with power from on high. Before that event they were ordinary men. After that event they were extraordinary men. Before the Resurrection they were men who slept when they should have watched, who fled when they should have faced the critical hour. After the Resurrection they watched and prayed, they were bold and brave, they were steadfast unto death, they witnessed a good confession of their Lord. Before the Resurrection they were weak as sand; after the Resurrection and under the pressure of a conviction mighty as a glacier, the shifting sands of life were changed like unto the glory of a great rock and a living stone.

They became men of the power of Christ. They were endowed with power from on high.

They made the Church of Christ, and they were living stones, living men. The most powerful agency of Eternal God which has ever entered this mortal world is the Church of Christ. Since that first Easter the world has been different. It can never be the same again. A new and mighty power entered the world through these disciples of Christ.

What then, was this power? What is the power of the Church of Christ? The answer is clear: The power of the Church of Christ is the power of Christ. The power of the Church of Christ is not ecclesiastical, nor territorial, nor is it vested exclusively in any one church or denomination; nor is it excluded from any. This power is not resident in ritual, or forms, or ceremonies, or orders. This power is not determined by dogmas, doctrines, and decrees. The power of the Church of Christ, is the power of Jesus, and that power is demonstrated goodness. "By their fruits ye shall know them." By their fruits ye shall know the real churches of Christ.

Do they produce goodness? Do they produce the goodness of Jesus? That is the real test. The true church is the church that produces the truth as it was in Jesus. The legacy of the first Easter was the endowment of the power of Christ; and

the legacy of every Easter in every church of Christ ought to be this same power.

On this first Sunday after Easter we ought, therefore, chiefly to consider to what extent we possess this power; in what this power consists. Are we also, different after Easter? Have we also risen with Christ, and do we seek those things that are above? Are we also transformed from weakness into strength? Have our guesses, doubts, and questionings been translated into convictions, hopes and beliefs. Have we also been renewed in life, so knowing God and Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal, that to us so frail, so sinful, even to us he has given power to become the sons of God? These are the solemn and searching questions which press insistently upon our conscience in this Sunday after Easter. Since the power of the Church of Christ is the power of Christ, what, then, is the power of Christ?

1. The power of Christ is first of all the power of a great vision. The power of Christ Jesus our Lord was the power of a man who could say with certitude: "I have seen the Father." Jesus saw the Father with unbeclouded vision; so clearly, so truly, that all men in all places in all times have been able to see God with clear-

est understanding through His clear vision. In His light we have seen light through His vision of God. We behold a Heavenly Father infinite in love, kindness and wisdom, eternal in righteousness and holiness, everlasting in His mercy. Through His vision of God we behold a new world, wherein dwell new creatures, even men, who, through the power of God working in them His eternal glory have made the kingdoms of this world to become the kingdoms of our God. Through his vision of God we behold a world immortal where there is no more death nor darkness, where God's will is our peace, and where we at last possess the love that passeth knowledge and the peace that passeth all understanding. The power of that great vision is the power of Christ.

That great vision is a sure element in the power of the Church of Christ. Our after-Easter confession is a great confession and a short confession. One thing we know; once we were blind; now we see. We have seen Jesus. Through Him we see God, and the land that is very far off and the King in His beauty. O Quanta Qualia! We see the Delectable Mountains and Emmanuel's Land—and oh! our Pilgrim hearts are fain to be those pilgrims marching through

Emmanuel's ground. We see the city which hath the foundations whose maker and builder is God. We see through the great vision of Jesus, the Father's house where there are many mansions, and therefore our hearts are not troubled neither are they afraid.

Now, it is certain that we finally are what we most truly behold. "What we see determines what we are." Seeing is the guide to being. If we see God, we shall at last be like unto Him. If we see Mammon we become children of Mammon. If we see evil, and see only evil, and concentrate all our energies and desires and wills on evil, we inevitably are moulded to the fashion of that evil. And if we see goodness and truth and beauty and holiness and righteousness and on those ultimates concentrate our desires and wills and deeds, we then become fashioned like unto the glory of that controlling vision. There is the power of the Church of Christ. It is the power of a great vision of God.

2. The power of the Church of Christ is also the power of a great sympathy. Jesus exercised infinite influence over men by virtue of his infinite sympathy. According to the power of God working in Him, He included within His sympathy all sorts and conditions of men. That sym-

pathy was inclusive, magnanimous, understanding, compassionate, tolerant, wise, tender and almighty. No one was excluded. All that came to Him, He in no wise cast out. None were too bad; none were too good. That sympathy was magnanimous, praying, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." That sympathy was wise, lifting the little children in His arms and saying, "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." That sympathy was compassionate: Publicans, harlots, thieves, outcasts, outlaws and all sinners were gathered within the protection of that great heart.

This mighty sympathy of Jesus is the very shelter of God. Here is sanctuary. Here is our refuge. Here is our shelter in the time of storm. Here is escape, for whatever may be the trouble. God will certainly provide a way of escape. That passage in St. John's gospel describing the woman taken in adultery, however critics may consider its canonical position in the record, is certainly indicative of the sympathy of Christ. Consider that scene and behold it now. There is the poor mortal caught in the very sin. There is the pack of prosecutors and persecutors crying in full voice. There, too, is the quiet Christ, the incarnation of the sympathy of God. He writes on the

sand; and our persecutions, our hardnesses, our cruelties, our hatreds, ought to be written only in such fleeing and fugitive records. He speaks, and His words have never ceased to echo and re-echo in the consciences of men: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." And again he stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground. And they, when they heard it, went out one by one, beginning from the eldest even unto the last. And Jesus was left alone; and the woman, where she was in the midst. Then to that poor, trembling, sinning mortal came the voice of the sympathy of God. "Neither do I condemn thee. Go thy way; from henceforth sin no more."

In that sympathy is the power of Christ. In such a sympathy is the power of the Church of Christ. His Church is the church of the sympathy of God. Within its vast compassion it gathers together all races, all creeds, all ranks, all conditions. Within its understanding love it gathers together all peoples, in all places, in all times. From the sympathy of the Church of Christ has proceeded good deeds, good works, good institutions; hospitals, schools and colleges; shelters, homes and sanctuaries. To that sympathy every man may escape as to a city of ref-

uge. To that sympathy every man may flee as to a sanctuary. Here he may cry, clinging Heaven by the hems. Here he may cry, clinging Christ by His mercy, by His grace. Here he will find a moral passion, a spiritual certitude, a human evaluation which exalts the man, the essential man, the child of God, far above the accidents of his day, the tragedies of his time.

The man is more than the body. The man is more than the taboo. The man is of more value than the Sabbath, for a man is a child of God. O man, child of God, if you come to Christ you will find sympathy; if you come to the Church of Christ you will find sanctuary; if you come, and cast your burden on the Lord, you will find peace. Here is the power of the Church of Christ. It is the power of Christ. It is the power of a Great Sympathy.

3. The power of Christ is, further, the power of a great salvation. We are endowed with power from on high. And that endowment, that gospel, is the power of God unto salvation. Our Christ is a saviour. Our Church of Christ is a church of the Saviour. Men are saved; men can be saved. It is true, tragically true, that we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. But thanks to God, which giveth us the victory, we have a

way of salvation. No matter how deep may be the pit into which a man has fallen, yet even from that depth and degradation, this power of God to salvation will lift up a man and place his feet on a rock and put a new song on his lips.

No matter how dark may be the light which covers your soul, yet even in that gross darkness you can find and will find your saving light. Even if you have made your bed in hell, even there you will find the gospel that is the power of God unto salvation. Even if you squander the precious hours of life, as in a far country, far from the ideal, and dwell in the uttermost parts of selfishness, saying: "Here will I take my ease and here will I escape the scrutiny of conscience; here will I forget, and here will I erase from the tablets of my memory, all records of the splendors, honors and commandments of God"; yet there, even there, in your selfishness, your forgetfulness, your carelessness, will suddenly loom before you the splendour and the honour of God; and there will be your gospel of the power of Christ. There are no boundaries to the saving power of the Church of Christ. Come to church in order that you may find Christ your Saviour. Come to Christ your Saviour in order that you may find life.

Come unto Him all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and He will give you rest. Come unto Him all ye that have forgotten His commandments to do them, and here you will find one who has never left you nor forgotten you. Come unto Him all ye whose sins have been the sins of carelessness and forgetfulness, and here you will find salvation of an invigorated will. Come unto Him all ye whose sins have been heavy, dark, unmentionable—the very remembrance of which is shame and woe—and here you will find righteousness and holiness. The Church of Christ is the ministrant of the saving Christ. Here is a way of salvation. Here is a company of pilgrims who walk that way to God. The gospel is the power of God to salvation. The power of Christ is the power of a great salvation.

4. The power of Christ is, also, the power of an endless life. We are endowed with power from on high; and one element of that power is the power of an endless life. To that we give decisive emphasis on this first Sunday after Easter. Our strength is measured by eternity.

The power of Christ is not simply the influence of a man who for a brief moment in time made his land a holy land, his home a holy family, his life a holy life. The power of Christ is not

alone the strength of a mortal goodness, a local habitation and a name in holiness. The power of Christ Jesus our Lord is the power of a love which, though crucified, still lives; of a faith which, though beaten and betrayed, still believes in men; of a hope which, seeing darkness, still confidently expects to behold light. This power of an endless life has been evident and emphatic in these Christian centuries. The permanent in Christianity has always been able to survive the transient. The eternal in Christianity has always managed to outlive the temporal. There has always been a perseverance of the essential, a persistence of moral imperatives. There is here a quality that is indestructible and invincible and certain at the last to be triumphant. Battles may be lost, but the war, at last, will be won.

The spirit of Jesus will become the spirit of man. The spirit of Jesus in all love and joy and peace at last will be the spirit of man. The spirit of Jesus in all righteousness and holiness at last will be the spirit of man. Because His power is the power of an endless life. If some men say "Jesus, Lord," when they really mean "Peter"; if some say "Jesus" when they mean "Apollos"; if some say "Jesus" when they mean "Paul"; their power and the power of their churches is the

power of a day. They have their day and cease to be. The power of the Church of Christ is the power of Christ and that power is rooted and grounded in an endless life. Peter, Paul and Apollos, and all apostles, prophets and martyrs, all saints and all souls cry loud, as one voice, saying: "Not from us, not from us proceeds this power. We were only the recipients of that power. We were only the transmitters of that power. Through us that power came. To the world, through us, that power was given. From Christ it came, and to Him be the glory and dominion and power."

Such a power, even the power of God through Jesus Christ, is the power of the Church of Christ. No uncertain voice speaks to the world after Easter, but a voice vibrant with the certitude of God. No uncertain institution confronts the world after the Easter victory, but a Church of Christ, certain of its convictions, abiding in the strength of the conscious power of Christ. In Him we live. In Him we have communion with men and God. Like Him, we know we came from God; we know we belong to God; we know we are going to God. His power worketh in us; the power of His great vision of God the Father; the power of His great sympathy for all

men; the power of His great salvation; the power of an endless life. Endowed with power from on high, the Church of Christ toils to make the kingdoms of this world to be the kingdom of our Christ.

PRAYER

Almighty and all merciful God, who hast endowed the church with power from on high, even with the power of Jesus Christ her Lord, grant that we the members of His church, may be so truly the members of His body, that Thy church throughout all the world, may be righteous, holy, and acceptable in Thy sight. *Amen.*

THE UNDERSTANDING HEART

"Yet in the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding . . . than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue."

—*I Cor. 14 : 19.*

TODAY is Whitsunday, the day in the Christian year when we think especially of what we mean by the Holy Spirit. Easter has its clear and obvious meaning; Christmas has a clear and singular meaning for everyone in the Church; but has Whitsunday so clear a meaning? Does everyone here understand so definitely the teaching of this day?

On Whitsunday we think of the Holy Spirit. What is the significance of that idea? What do we mean by the communion of the Holy Ghost? We mean this: This Whitsunday and this doctrine of the Divine Spirit answer the old question: "What is it that men really need?" "What is it that you really need?" What all men really need is a better understanding. Sometimes, it is a better understanding of the earth; sometimes a better understanding of the stars; sometimes, a

better understanding of the seas, the floods, the winds, the rocks, the flowers; sometimes a better understanding of trade, the laws of government and of man. Now this doctrine teaches us that the best way to understand man, and the world in which man lives, is first of all to understand God; for a common intelligence produces a common feeling; a common understanding produces a truer coöperation. The only way, says Christianity, to understand the God without you, is first of all to understand the God within you. The only way, says our Gospel, to idealize the present is first of all to realize the past. It is much better, therefore, as you try to realize the past and understanding the God that is within you, the Divine Spirit which has control of man and man's world—it is much better to "speak five words with the understanding than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." So the intelligent symbol of this Whitsunday has always been the symbol of fire. We symbolize the spirit of God with fire. Fire under control is a useful instrument, a servant of man. Fire without control is an indescribable tyrant and leads to conflagrations and disaster. And so the Divine Spirit, the holy fire within you, restrained and controlled, guided by Jesus Christ, leads you into

peace and righteousness. So the Divine Spirit like a fire uncontrolled and undirected, leads to mere emotional conflagrations, and great human disasters. Better five words with the Holy Spirit which you understand than ten thousand words which you do not understand.

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit has always been attended in our churches with some vagueness and with some confusion. It has very often been associated with a strange definition of man. It has thought of man as helpless, or altogether bad, or entirely evil. Suddenly a Divine Spirit sweeps over him as the wind sweeps over a harp. He is under control; he is mastered; a force outside of himself governs him, and speaks through him. In the Church, again and again, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has been associated with this erroneous and evil definition of man.

Repeatedly, at home and abroad, people have thought they had the Spirit of God within them, when it has expressed itself in a wild emotionalism, in a superficial thinking, in strange sounds and expressions. And yet, it is so simple and so clear! The teaching of the Holy Spirit is simply this: There is within everyone here something of the Divine Spirit of God; oh, so imperfectly! The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is simply this:

There was in the Lord Jesus Christ the Divine Spirit of God; oh, so perfectly! One of the most beautiful verses about Jesus in the New Testament is "Jesus full of the Holy Spirit," coming up from the desert, going to Jerusalem, passing through Nazareth.

We in our imperfect humanity have something of the Divine Spirit. And yet we are so far from the Heavenly Father's vision as we have seen it in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Let me comment first of all on our thought, therefore, by saying that *the Holy Spirit is a universal experience*. The Divine Spirit of God is in every human being. There has been a great change within the last hundred years in our thinking upon this subject. We have passed from an absolute view of faith into the relativity of all faith. We have seen that there is something of the Divine Spirit of God in all religions and in all faiths. I heard this week, for example, a veteran servant of God who had served in the Army of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was speaking to us about the crude, rough, primitive, savage faith in God's children in Africa; and I was profoundly impressed to hear him say that he did not look upon these primitive faiths as absolutely devoid of the Divine Spirit, altogether

without a spark of the heavenly fire. He recognized that even in these savages of that dark continent, in their rude sacraments and strange faiths there was something of that same Divine fire which flamed and burned so gloriously in the religion of Jesus Christ. We have recognized the relativity of all faith; and the true missionary, the true minister does not come with a doctrine saying: "Your faiths are heathen, altogether erroneous; there is no light in them; there is no fear of God in you." He comes to have instead a recognition for whatever fire there may be, whatever truth may be gathered up in these ancient sacraments and faiths. And again, even in our own doctrines and customs, we have recognized this relativity. We have seen that there has been a development, a growth in these scriptures which we call the Bible. Not every part of the scripture has the same value as the other parts. There is a relativity of value. Some parts of the Bible lead the community to a higher understanding of God. Other parts of that book will not lead you into a higher understanding of God. We recognize here, and it must be plain to everyone, a growth and a development. It is better to have five words that speak to the understanding than ten thousand that speak to you in

an unknown tongue. It is better to go to all members of God's family on earth recognizing in all humility and wisdom the five words with understanding, than the ten thousand words which have no intelligibility for you or for God.

2. The second remark to be noted in our study of the understanding spirit is this: *the Holy Spirit is within you.* That seems a platitude. It hardly seems worth the comment. And yet right here has always been a temptation for the Christian Church, for all churches. For we have been tempted to think of religion as a religion of authority without, and not a religion of authority within. Human beings have always been tempted to find the Church of God without them in some person, or in some institution, or in some organization, and not within—within their conscience, which they sometimes dare not face; within their soul, which sometimes they dare not speak to; within their heart, which sometimes they are ashamed to meet. The Holy Spirit of God is within you. Yet we have always been tempted to find our authority in this book, or in this hierarchy, or in this institution. Congregational churches have always pleaded, and I affectionately plead this morning, that we may always remember that the Spirit of Freedom is

only to be found in church and religion when we remember that the Church is within us and not without. The authority is within you and not without you. It is you who must make the decision; it is you who must take the step toward God; it is you and you only who can open your conscience, your heart and your soul to the Heavenly Father. And I passionately plead this morning as a Congregational minister, that we may keep our Church a sanctuary of freedom. For it is always a temptation to build organizations within the Church, societies within the Church, through which machinery we forget that the true object of a church is not good fellowship or social living. It is the worship of God; it is the searching for that Divine fire which will purify your hearts and lead them into that life that was in Jesus Christ our Lord.

A true Church of Christ, therefore, like a true commonwealth, must always passionately and diligently guard this spirit of freedom. For example, in the preaching of a church there is always the possibility for the ecclesiastic to invade upon the parish minister, the priest to intrude upon the prophetic speaker; and a minister, like a church, if he is to keep close to God and lead the people into the knowledge of truth,

must zealously guard his time and thinking so that the Church may be a prophetic church and the ministry may be a prophetic ministry. A church, like a commonwealth, must valiantly guard this freedom.

I was listening in my study this week to Thucydides as he urged the men in Athens to remember that "happiness is freedom, and freedom is valour." I was listening to Milton reminding the Lords and Commons, in 1643, of those inquisitions and tyrannies which had "dampt the glory of Italian wits; so that nothing had been there written now these many years but flattery and fustian." I listened to Burke pleading that England would so keep the real spirit of authority, in the sovereignty of freedom, that men would turn their faces from all parts of the world to that true abiding place of liberty.

And I listened to our own leader, Lincoln, as he pleaded with us to remember that only as we did our part on our battlefields, in our real Gettysburgs, would this nation, under God, have a new birth of freedom.

A church like a commonwealth must be free in order to hear the spirit. Not in institutions and organizations, not in the noise of machinery, not in the trumpeting of clubs and societies, but in

the still, small voice of a prophetic church, and a prophetic minister, will you hear the Spirit of God. Better five words with understanding than ten thousand words of machinery.

3. The third remark to be made in this study of the understanding spirit is this: The Holy Spirit within you must be nurtured in the spirit of Jesus. The best is yet to be. It is a process of growth; it is a process of development. Just as your Bible is the result of a growth, just as the faith of humanity in this world is the result of a development, so the spirit within you must be tried, must be educated, must be nurtured in the spirit of Jesus Christ. Here again we have always been confronted with the occult and with the magical. People have yearned for a conversion or change by which the Divine Spirit would come from without and suddenly sweep them from sinning into sainthood, suddenly cast out the darkness and fill them with all light. The Gospel of Jesus Christ tells us that the Spirit of God does not come from without into you; it comes from within, out into humanity. The Gospel of Jesus Christ tells us that what we need is "Communion and not contact," "fervor and not fever," an inward sympathy of the spirit proceeding outward into the occupations of moral-

ity and conduct. Here again we have always been confronted with the temptation of revivals, emotionalism and uncontrolled sentimentality. People through these great experiences, through these tumults of the crowd, have striven to enter into a religion of God. Again it has been a temptation of the ten thousand words, in an unknown tongue; and oh, better for the Christian here to have five words of understanding in religion, than ten thousand words in the incoherencies of the crowd. The Lord Jesus Christ described religion in terms of bread: "I am the living bread," and bread, if it is to be wholesome, has to be carefully prepared or else it will be like Ephraim, and Ephraim was a cake half turned. Christianity, if it is to produce men fashioned in the glory of Jesus Christ must understand that the Divine Spirit must be reared, nurtured, developed, educated; that the Divine Fire within us must be guarded, guided and controlled, or else what should be liberty will be license, and what should heat and warm the house will burn it to the ground.

So on this Whitsunday, preaching on the Holy Spirit, I have simply been preaching to you about God. One of the wise men in New England said: "New England has only one word to

say to you and that one word is "God." Every sermon really has only one word to say and that one word is "God." Whether we come through Christmas or Easter, whether we come through the spirit within, or the thought of morality and ethics without, all are paths to God. And this sermon, if it is to mean anything to anyone here, must bring us somewhat nearer to God than we were yesterday or the week before. And the teaching in particular of this day has been simply this: God is accessible. God is nigh unto you. God is nearer to you than you think or dream or imagine. God is nearer to you than you can ever be to Him. The teaching of the Divine Spirit, the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, means that God is nigh to everyone and God is in everyone. This spirit of goodness within you can be increased, into the glory of Jesus Christ. Sickness disintegrates the body; sin disintegrates the soul. All that holds our bodies together is the unseen mystery of life. All that holds our souls together is the unseen mystery of God. So our Lord Jesus Christ was wise—oh so wise! with all the wisdom of the infinite, when He gave His Gospel not to institutions, not to organization, not to books; simply to life. He gave it simply to human beings. Sickness breaks the

body; sin breaks the soul in fragments. Better, therefore, to have five words of understanding than ten thousand without. Better a little bit of health and life which holds the soul together, than ten thousand forces which break it into fragments. Better to have the soul talk sense than to have the soul talk gibberish. And a soul that speaks ten thousand words without understanding, uses the Divine Spirit for a wild discord. And a soul that dares to speak in liberty five words of understanding, disdaining with contempt the ten thousand words that may be popular, such a soul, like Jesus Christ, is a master making heavenly music on a noble instrument.

What we pray for on this Whitsunday, therefore, is a religion that makes for "communion and not simply for contact." What we pray for on this Whitsunday is an understanding of Christianity that will be like a ladder reaching to the stars, and not a roof to shield us from the sky and shelter us from the storms we dare not face.

PRAYER

Almighty and all merciful God, our Heavenly Father, make us free with the freedom of

Jesus Christ; give us the wisdom to recognize Thy presence in dark and shadowy lives. Oh, help us, we beseech Thee, so to train this Divine Fire in us and in all humanity, that the life that was in Jesus Christ may be in all Thy children, to Thy glory in heaven and in earth. *Amen.*

THE CHURCH AS THE BEAUTIFUL GATE

Text—"The Beautiful Gate of the Temple."
—*Acts 3 : 10.*

"THE beautiful gate of the temple." This text is taken from the Scripture lesson which we read to you this morning. The scene is one of the most famous and familiar in the Acts of the Apostles. Peter and John are on their way to the temple; they are going up to the evening hour of prayer; they are passing through the beautiful gate of the temple. A man is brought there every day by his friends; he is a lame man. He begs for gifts from all those who pass through the beautiful gate into the temple. He sees Peter and John and begs a gift from them. They look at him intently; they fasten their eyes on him, and Peter says: "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk." And not two men, but three, went through the beautiful gate, praising God.

In this familiar story you have the parable,

I believe, for you, my friends, on this your first Sunday in this ancient meeting house. The truth embodied here, I think, is this: the perfect adjustment of the person and the place, the perfect relation between the people and the environment. Here was a beautiful gate, here was a beautiful deed; you have a perfect adjustment between the beautiful gate and the beautiful life. Here was a gate-way distinguished for its beauty in a material sense; here was an act of an apostle with the distinction of spiritual beauty. The truth embodied in this story for us all this morning is the perfect adjustment of a people to their environment. Is not that the truth in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ? Our Lord Jesus is, in his own words, the door, the gate, the beautiful gate into the knowledge of God, because in His life you find a perfect adjustment of the individual to his environment, perfect harmony between the man and his world. Is that not the truth for us in the South Church today? We are gathered together on this glorious October morning. Behind us is the memory of the fire and the disaster. Behind us is a recollection of those sickening hours when we feared that this ancient meeting house would pass away from this gate of the city. Now it is restored

in beauty and in strength, and we give thanks to all the men in the Church and to all the men employed by them, for the good work of their hands, praising God and praying that He may establish the work of their hands.

This building is one of the great possessions in the city of Hartford; its Colonial beauty is a sermon preached not only on Sunday, but on every day of the week, to the hurrying throngs and multitudes, the congregations of our streets and sidewalks. And has not this morning also a personal and tender significance for the members of our congregation, because this is the first Sunday in sixty years in which we have not the presence of Doctor Parker in our congregation? For the first time practically since I came to be your minister I stand alone this morning, and I ask for you and from you the continuing loyalty and love which in so large a measure you have already given me. I ask from you the loyalty and the love which for over sixty years you gave to your minister, making through him and through you, this Church to be one of the beautiful gates in the Church of Christ in Hartford.

We are thankful for the beauty of this house. It is our environment this morning and we feel the truth of our lesson when it calls us to under-

stand that a church has the beauty of holiness when there is a perfect adjustment between the people and their environment. So, we ask, what is the environment of a church? With what are we surrounded? Peter and John were surrounded by the stones of that beautiful gate. Was that all their environment? The environment of Peter and John was not only and simply the gate of stone.

1. Their environment was in the first place the consciousness of God; their environment was the sense of God. They were surrounded in that hour on the road to prayer, with the presence of God. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth they were going up to the temple; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth they spoke to the lame man. Their environment was the consciousness of God; their surroundings were a communion with Jesus Christ.

Now, every church, in order to be a beautiful gate in the temple of God, strives to establish that consciousness of God, some in one way, some in another. No church has a prerogative, no denomination has a special privilege. Some in one way, some in another, strive to establish this sense of God. The Society of Friends reach this goal through a ministry of silence, through

obedience to the inner light, and through the outward expression of the inward voice; and this ancient Congregational Church, the old Second Parish Church of this city, strives to establish this consciousness of God by an humble, eager search for truth in silence, in psalm, and in the spoken word.

You have come here this morning to seek for God and to know your Heavenly Father, and when a congregation is made up of Peters and Johns who come to their beautiful temple desiring to know God, hungering and thirsting for that communion with Jesus Christ which these men had, then you have a perfect adjustment between the people and the place, a spiritual harmony between the congregation and the outward beauty of the house.

2. So their environment was a consciousness of God. But it was something more. There they were surrounded by the beautiful gate of stone. It was encompassed for them as a halo by the consciousness of God. But their environment was something more. They saw the stones; they saw the unseen presence of God; they saw also the lame man. There on the threshold of that beauty was a broken humanity. Some people might have said, "this poor lame man is in vio-

lent discord with the beauty of this gate; this broken and crippled humanity is in crashing conflict with the grace and symmetry and speaking beauty of these silent stones. Take him away. The gate will be more beautiful if this broken humanity is not on the threshold of this glorious grace and strength."

But that was not the attitude of Peter and John. I think the beautiful gate of the temple was all the more beautiful to them because they saw there the man, lame from his birth. The beautiful gate of the temple was all the more graceful and glorious to them because they saw there this broken and crippled humanity, for they knew and understood that out of that spiritual material, Jesus Christ, our Lord, made the very cornerstones in the gates of His temple. Here was the building material; here was the living stone; and here was the spiritual fabric out of which they, like their Master, could build the spiritual gate in the temple of the spirit of God.

The very century in which you live has been such a beautiful gate of the temple; your country has for its distinction the fact that it has seen the lame man of the world at the beautiful gate of the temple; your century has been

distinguished for the support given to hospitals, to doctors, to nurses, to humane institutions, and to missionary work. The Church which has this love for humane work, for missionary effort, is the church which sees the lame man at the beautiful gate of the temple. The church which sees not only the outward beauty of the fabric, which feels not only the unseen presence of God, but which also recognizes the lame man of the world on the threshold of their house, is a church of Christ which is entering into a perfect adjustment between the people and the place. Is it not clear, my friends, that Peter and John were becoming perfectly related to their environment when they felt not only the beauty of the fabric, not only the beauty of the unseen presence of God, but the beauty of the possibility of a restored and renewed humanity?

A church is beautiful when it feels the presence of God; a church is beautiful when it feels the presence of humanity. A church is a beautiful gate of the temple when it has a holy communion with God; a church of Christ is a beautiful gate of the temple when it has a great conscience for humanity.

There is in North America a wild and rocky coast called Labrador which arches the wild

flood of the northern seas like a gate-way in God's temple of the world; and one man named Doctor Grenfell has made that rocky arch a beautiful gate of the temple because he has had a vision of the lame man on God's threshold at that gate. And South Church will feel a tender and affectionate concern for his work when we recall that one of our boys who has graduated from college and the Medical School is working this winter with Doctor Grenfell in Labrador. He is helping the lame man of the world. And, through your fellowship with him, you also behold the lame man at the beautiful gate of the temple, and you lift him up into a renewed humanity. Because God can only work through human beings. God works through stones and through wood and through the speaking beauty of this house and the gate of the temple. But the gate of the temple would not have healed that poor lame man. If he had stood there till doomsday the stones could not have lifted him up and made him walk. God needs not only stones, but human beings—living stones fitly joined together and compact in the compassion of Jesus Christ. God needs you men and women of this congregation through your philanthropies, through your churches, through your gifts,

above all through your prayers and faith, to touch the lame man of the world on the threshold of his gate. The Divine Light must shine through you; for you are "the light of the world." The Divine Fire must burn in you; you are the "candles of the Lord." Fire needs "the manifestation point" to gather the flames together, now in a candle, now in a lamp, in order to give light. God works through human beings; you are the manifestation points; you are the places of contact. Peter and John come in contact with the poor lame man at the gate of the temple, and God, the Infinite Father, works through that human contact.

How do you value a nation? How do you value a church? You value a church in precisely the same way in which you judge a nation. A nation is judged, not by its traditions, no matter how glorious, not by its historic achievements, no matter how famous. A nation is judged by its capacity to make men; a nation stands or falls by its ability to make perfect men. So with the Church. A church is judged and valued, not by its historic past, not by the solemnity of its ceremonies and liturgies, not by its historic achievements. A church is judged and valued by its ability to make men; a church is a beautiful

gate of the temple when all the congregation, like Peter and John, even if they have no silver and gold, have yet such faith in God to offer, that the broken and crippled humanity of the world is made strong and erect and able to work for God.

3. Their environment was the unseen presence of God; their environment was the poor lame man; their environment was also the congregation. They were going into the temple. Three men went through the gate. They were immediately surrounded by the fellowship of the worshippers. They entered into the great congregation; they were now one, two and three in a multitude. A church is a beautiful gate of the temple when it has a communion with the unseen presence of God, when it has a great conscience for humanity and when it has a fellowship with worshippers. This church will be a beautiful gate of the temple when the congregation here has the spirit of kindness and gentleness and of obedience to the inner light, companionship with the inner voice, sweetness and kindness and gentleness with all those who worship here. A church is a beautiful gate of the temple when it is filled with a congregation of worshippers. People join a church and enter a

congregation because they know that the good of this world must be organized. The good of this world must be organized into groups, societies, meetings and congregations; because the evil of this world is organized. You know that when evil in a large and organized sense strikes your city it cannot be met with an occasional and sporadic resistance. For example, when evil in the form of disease—assaults and attacks a city, the resistance cannot be individual and occasional. We have to resist it as a group; we have to attack it as a city and a community; we have to work together.

There is the reason why people should go to church; there is the reason why people should worship God in a congregation. Evil in this world is organized; therefore, if it is to be defeated, it must be met by the organized resistance of the congregation. The fellowship of all those who worship is the organized effort of the goodness of God resisting the evil of this world.

I summon you then this morning to make this ancient South Church of Hartford a beautiful gate in the Church of Christ in this city. It will be a beautiful gate when you remember your environment. You will recall that your environment speaks to you as through a parable, through

this wood and brick. Your church will be beautiful when your environment is a recognition of the unseen presence of God, a recognition of the humanity in the world, a recognition of all those who worship with you—the unseen presence of God whom you need and who needs you, the humanity of the world who needs you, the other worshippers whom you need. What made that gate beautiful? Three realities: the unseen presence of God, the poor lame man, the great congregation of the temple. What will make this church beautiful? Even those same three realities: the unseen presence of God, a broken humanity restored and renewed in life, and the fellowship of a great congregation.

I summon everyone in this house to remember that this church will be a beautiful gate of the temple when they understand the teaching of their Lord that every person's life is a door-way unto God. Jesus Christ said he was the door. Even so his apostle must be a door-way unto God; even so every disciple must be a gate-way into the understanding of God; and every man's life will be a beautiful gate in God's temple when he feels about him the presence of the Eternal, when he beholds before him his brother man in need, when he feels about him the presence of

the great congregation. Therefore lift up your hearts and rejoice; be glad this morning, for you are surrounded with the beauty of your Lord, the glory of a renewed humanity, the relationship of those who worship God.

PRAYER

Infinite Father, Father of all men and of our Lord Jesus Christ, we pray for Thy blessing upon all the churches of Christ, that they may be blessed and beautiful gates of Thy temple—open and effectual doors of Thy Kingdom, through which all people that on earth do dwell may enter into Thy Presence and Thy Power and Thy Peace. *Amen.*

A MODERN PURITAN CHURCH

"Jesus said, 'I am the way, the truth and the life.' "—*John 14 : 6.*

TODAY we are thinking of Pilgrims and of Puritans. Perhaps some people have thought that we have been thinking too much about them. There is always a tendency to throw a halo over the past; there is always a tendency to delegate the golden age either to the future or to the past.

Now it is perfectly clear to the student of the Pilgrim and the Puritan Church, reading the history of New England for three hundred years, that some of the values have not endured; other values have been maintained. During these three hundred years, things have been shaken in order that the things that can be shaken might pass away, in order that things that could not be shaken might endure. The order of service of the Puritan Church has largely passed away. Very much of the theology expressed in the Savoy platform, the Cambridge platform, of the

Westminster catechism has passed away from our churches. But there are some values, priceless in their character, which have endured. The current of the churches during these three hundred years has been the historic stream. That which has passed away has been in the nature of eddies. The current of the New England churches has been the current of the republic and some of the great principles for which these churches have stood are the principles for which the nation under God still stands. They are suggested by these words of Jesus. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life."

1. One of the first enduring values is the value of freedom. A Puritan church was and is a free church. It is a free way. Jesus said, "I am the way," and to His company in those first years was not even given the name of church or denomination. They were simply spoken of as those who walked the way. The religion was not called Christianity. It was simply called "the Way." A church of Jesus Christ is a free way between man and God; therefore, one of the most enduring values is this value of freedom. Such a church as this, a New England church, is absolutely free and independent. The Puritans stood and we stand for no outward and ecclesias-

tical authority. They declared that a church was free, and no pope, no bishop, no council, no synod, no outward body of men could in any way dictate or prescribe to a free and independent church. All that comes from outside comes in the nature of a request, a petition, a suggestion. It does not come with the voice of authority. The voice of authority is vested in the free and independent congregation, the people, who are pilgrims of the way called Jesus; the disciples of a religion which is a way between this finite world and the infinite world. The people in the congregation are free. Only as they are free can they have responsibility and obligation; only as they have obligation and responsibility will God's kingdom come on earth. God's kingdom will never come until you feel responsibility; God's kingdom will never come on earth until you feel the obligation for that advent; and that sense of obligation and responsibility can never be vested in slaves. Slaves are not responsible. The hireling has no sense of obligation. It is the master and the owner in that case who have the sense of obligation and responsibility. Men and women whose intellects are mechanic, men and women who are predestined and foreordained cannot have, any more

than slaves and hirelings, a sense of responsibility and obligation. This comes only to those who are free, free in their self-consciousness, free in their mind, free in the world of decision and of effort. As Wordsworth said, "We must be free or die who speak the tongue that Shakespeare spake." And it was Bradford in Plymouth who said, "We shook off the yoke as God's free people." As God's free peoples you walk the way called Jesus Christ.

2. In the second place, one of the enduring values of a Puritan church is the search for truth. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth." The New England church has always stood for a learned ministry. Their first ministers were graduates either of Cambridge or of Oxford. We have always felt and believed that the truth cannot be discovered unless we use in the world-search, all that can be had from a trained mind, all that can be had from a disciplined soul, all that can be had from the learning of men and of God. We believe that as we know the truth, and only as we know the truth, shall we be free.

So in these three hundred years we have sought for the truth about God. In that discovery and in that search we have moved from

one idea to another, from one point to another, even as discoverers and explorers move from one continent to another continent, crossing ocean after ocean. In our desire for the search of truth about God we have thought of Him in New England, first, as sovereign and absolute, a monarch infinite in His power, condemning the great majority as rebels to infinite death. We have moved in our search for truth from that absolute definition of God to a God infinite in love, infinite in kindness, infinite in wisdom, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who loves us as His children. We have diminished not one whit the sovereignty of the Puritan, but we have lifted up that sovereignty into the love which is the fulfillment of the law. In our search for truth we have moved in these three hundred years in our understanding of man. The heroic men and women who founded these churches were right in making man the centre of their universe; they were right in saying that humanity and not the institution, the man and not the ecclesiastic, the men and women and children of God were the way through which we were to come into a knowledge of God's will for us. They were wrong in saying that human nature was fundamentally

and originally bad, totally and altogether wicked and vile; and only by a startling and sudden event could it by any means be made good.

In our search for truth we have come to believe that this human nature is of the nature of light and of love, that this human nature is fundamentally and originally good, that we are children of God and that it rests with us as free beings; on us lies the responsibility and the obligation, to clean away the undeniable sin and remove the undeniable wrong, to lift up into growth the likeness of God, of God that is within us. In our search for truth we have come in these three hundred years to a different understanding of sin. We do not believe that sin is delegated to a remote past and to the operations of people and individuals centuries removed from us. Much does depend on inheritance; much does depend on environment; but after all, the responsibility and the obligation rest with us. We shall not be punished for what our ancestors committed. Little children in our slums and cities will not be punished for the environment for which they are not to blame. The responsibility and the obligation, so far as our sins are concerned, lie with us as individuals. In our search for truth we remember those brave

words of the founders of these churches which you will find in the old Covenant of these Hartford churches, which you will find in the Covenant of Plymouth and of Salem: "As God's free people they joined themselves together by a covenant with the Lord into a church estate in the fellowship of the gospel *made known or to be made known unto them," Made known or to be made known unto them!* There is the motto, the high and singing word, in our search for truth.

3. A third enduring value in the New England church is the knowledge that *life comes to those who live under law.* Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." A living church is a church obedient to the law of God in Jesus Christ; a living church of Christ is a church that knows that life can be had only under law. For example, take your parable as our Lord Jesus took his parables, from the common life; take your parable from the crowded city street before this meeting house, from the crowded city street in the heart of New York or Boston or Chicago. That city street is under the sovereignty of law. What poetry is in the great Fifth Avenue in New York! A stream of vehicles and people pours down that thorough-

fare. They have freedom; they have life; but they have freedom and life only because they are under law—the law of the traffic. Suppose there were no traffic laws; suppose there were no guardians of the law; suppose that every automobile and every individual were free to go where they pleased. What would be the result? The result would be confusion, conflict, disaster and death. This great street has freedom and life and beauty only as it lives under the law of the street. That is the point for our country and our church to consider today. There is a prevailing opinion in our country that life is license; that freedom is license; that life and freedom are to be had only under lawlessness. There is a wild disregard for the moral laws of the universe. There is a spoken and unspoken contempt for the moral laws of God. These are the fools whose souls will be required. The world will come to confusion, conflict, anarchy and death even as the street will come to anarchy and death, if the great traffic of humanity does not move in obedience to law.

Life at its best, life abundant, life richest, is to be had only in obedience to the moral law of God. Those who give themselves to Jesus Christ, those who bathe their consciousness as a sword

is bathed in heaven in the consciousness of Jesus Christ, those who give themselves entirely to Him will find that their lives move in order, in harmony, in peace, because they are obedient to the law of God in Jesus Christ.

4. In the last place, one of the enduring values maintained by the New England churches in these three hundred years is the consciousness that a church is a church of Christ; it is not a church of John Knox, or Cranmer, or Wesley, or Bradford, or Hooker. So the old churches of New England bear the true and the real name of a church,—the Church of Christ in Hartford, the Church of Christ in Plymouth, the Church of Christ in Salem. A church is a Church of Christ.

The text reads: "Jesus says, 'I am the way, the truth and the life.'" A church will walk that way; a church will discover new truth; a church will live under the law only so far as it is a church of Jesus Christ. This opens the doorway for all; this opens the doorway for all people who are members and not members; this opens the doorway for children as children of the covenant. To be a member of a church is to be a member of Jesus Christ. To be a member of the Church of Christ is to live and move and

have your being in the spirit of Jesus Christ. It is simple; it is clear; it is not dependent upon theology or philosophy or learning, or wealth or position in life. Everyone in this room this morning may understand, can understand, ought to understand the simplicity and the beauty of the life of Jesus Christ; everyone here may walk that way of honor; everyone here may search in the world and discover the truth; everyone here can live in obedience to that law, for the love of Jesus Christ is fulfillment of the law.

And so the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ has always been the preaching of a simple word, a clear evangel, easy to understand. Oh, too often the doctors of the Church have made that way dark with their reasoning and their understandings; in their search for truth, in their passion for reality, in their love for system, they have too often obscured the clear and simple way! Everyone in this room may come to God in the simple spirit of Jesus Christ.

What, then, is a Church of God? What, then, are some of these enduring values in a Church of God? A church of Jesus Christ, free, devoted to truth, living under the law—such a church is not primarily a business corporation, not primarily a social welfare organization, not pri-

marily a field for taxation, not primarily a platform for propaganda. A Church of Jesus Christ, free, devoted to truth, obedient to the law of God, and therefore a living church, is primarily a spiritual fellowship of free and independent men and women, consecrated to the discovery of truth. In the words of the old Covenant—"We, as God's free people, join ourselves together by a covenant of the Lord into a church estate, in the fellowship of the Gospel to walk in His ways, made known or to be made known to us, according to our best endeavor, whatever it may cost us, the Lord assisting us."

PRAYER

Almighty and all merciful God, our Heavenly Father, bless the churches of our country. Help us to be strong in the power and in the spirit of Jesus Christ. Help us to lift up the glory of Thy cross and the power of Thy kingdom; consecrate our beliefs and our works; and Oh, help us to bring Thy kingdom in our country and in the world, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

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